

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 257 241

EC 172 568

AUTHOR Goldberg, Paula F.; And Others  
TITLE The Parents Helping Parents and Count Me In Projects: Evaluation Report, 1983-1984.  
INSTITUTION PACER Center, Inc., Minneapolis, MN.  
SPONS AGENCY Bremer (Otto) Foundation, St. Paul, Minn.; Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC. Div. of Personnel Preparation.  
PUB DATE Aug 84  
NOTE 71p.; For 1982-1983 Evaluation Report, see EC 172 567.  
AVAILABLE FROM PACER Center, Inc., (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights), 4826 Chicago Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55417 (\$1.00).  
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)  
EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Advocacy; \*Attitude Change; \*Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; \*Parent Education; Program Evaluation; Puppetry; State Programs; Volunteers  
IDENTIFIERS PACER Center MN

## ABSTRACT

The report presents 1983-84 evaluative data on two projects sponsored by the PACER Center (the Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights): a statewide parent training program and a program designed to foster positive attitudes about handicapped persons. The parent training program is analyzed in terms of five levels of activity: public information, general parent workshops, special workshops, advocacy training, and individual information and advocacy assistance. The attitude-change program, Count Me In, includes components of public information, volunteer training, trainer training, and puppet show presentations. The project expanded its handicap awareness program to junior high students. (CL)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
\* from the original document. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

# Evaluation Report

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as  
received from the person or organization  
originating it  
Minor changes have been made to improve  
reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-  
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE  
position or policy

ED257241

## PACER CENTER, INC.

### PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

A parent training project to educate parents of handicapped  
children about state and federal special education laws.

### COUNT ME IN

A project to train volunteers to present puppet shows and  
information about disabilities to nonhandicapped children.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY  
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

*Paula  
Goldberg*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PACER Center, Inc.  
(Parent Advocacy Coalition  
for Educational Rights)  
4826 Chicago Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN. 55417

Phone: (612) 827-2966  
TDD & Voice

1983-1984

# PACER CENTER, INC.

(THE PARENT ADVOCACY COALITION FOR EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS)

## Evaluation Report

1983-1984

## The PARENTS HELPING PARENTS and COUNT ME IN projects

### PREPARED BY PACER STAFF:

Paula F. Goldberg, Co-director  
Marge Goldberg, Co-director  
Betty Binkard  
Rianne Leaf  
Virginia Richardson  
LeAnne Nelson-Dahl  
Polly Edmunds  
Sue Peterson  
Marcella Bergdahl  
Jane Behning  
Judy Sweeney  
Elizabeth Brier

The 18 organizations involved in the PACER Coalition are listed in the Appendix.

PACER Center is funded by grants from the Division of Personnel Preparation, Office of Special Education, Department of Education; the McKnight Foundation, the Bremer Foundation, and other foundations, corporations and individuals. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of any of PACER's funding sources.

©Copyright PACER Center, Inc. - August 1984.

TABLE OF CONTENTS  
PACER CENTER EVALUATION REPORT  
1983 -- 1984

INTRODUCTION	1
--------------	---

(SECTION I - PARENT TRAINING PROJECT)

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION OF PACER'S PARENT TRAINING PROJECT 1983-84	3
--	---

EVALUATION OF 1983-84 ACTIVITIES

Level I - Public Information	5
------------------------------	---

Level II and Level III - Workshops for Parents and Special Groups Follow-Up Survey	8
---	---

Level IV - Training of Advocates	19
----------------------------------	----

Level V - Individual Assistance Follow-Up Survey	23
---	----

(SECTION II - COUNT ME IN PROJECT)

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION	29
-----------------------------	----

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION OF COUNT ME IN PROJECT 1983-84	30
--	----

EVALUATION OF 1983-84 ACTIVITIES

Level I - Public Information	32
------------------------------	----

Level II - Volunteer Training Workshops	34
---	----

Level III - Training of Trainers and Replication	40
--	----

Level IV - Presentations	40
--------------------------	----

Secondary School Project	49
--------------------------	----

APPENDIX

Participating Organizations

Board of Directors

Note: When results of PACER's programs are summarized in statements such as, "PACER Center served approximately 9,300 people," the number may actually include several contacts from the same person. In other words, the 9,300 refers to the total contacts made--the actual number of persons is less than 9,300.

# Background and Introduction

PACER Center is a coalition of 18 organizations in Minnesota concerned with the education of children and youth with physical, mental, emotional, and learning disabilities.

PACER was established in 1976 when it conducted a five month pilot project in Minnesota under a small grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. The Minnesota Department of Education continues to cooperate and provide encouragement to PACER Center.

Since September 1978, PACER has been funded by grants from the Division of Personnel Preparation (DPP), Office of Special Education, U.S. Department of Education. PACER was the first parent coalition funded by DPP to provide parent training.

As of September 1981, PACER received funding through a second, three-year grant from the DPP. Additional financial assistance came from the McKnight Foundation and from the Bremer Foundation (for the COUNT ME IN program, described below) as well as from other corporations and foundations and from private contributions.

PACER Center's main function continues to be to inform parents of handicapped children of their rights and responsibilities under special education laws. Major activities include:

1. PARENT TRAINING PROJECT IN MINNESOTA. Minnesota parents of handicapped children are trained in knowledge of laws and regulations concerning special education to enable them to work better and more effectively with their children's schools and to serve as advocates for better programs. Five levels of activity are included in this subcomponent: public information, general parent workshops, special workshops, advocacy training, and individual information and advocacy assistance.
2. COUNT ME IN. PACER has continued its handicap awareness project which trains others in the presentation of puppet shows designed to convey to school children knowledge about handicapping conditions and to develop positive feelings about classmates with disabilities. This program includes: public information, training volunteers to present the puppet programs, training of trainers, and puppet show presentations. In addition, this year the COUNT ME IN staff, having developed and piloted scripts designed for use with older audiences, has expanded its handicap awareness program to the secondary school level with favorable results indicated by the audiences of junior high students.
3. PARENT TRAINING REPLICATION PROJECT. PACER has continued its replication activities, sending materials (including a replication booklet developed in 1981-82 in conjunction with Dissemin/Action) and/or talking individually with almost 1,000 callers and correspondents from states and countries outside Minnesota and the United States.

4. OUTREACH EFFORTS. In cooperation with the Minneapolis public school system, this year PACER participated in an outreach program that brought together a large audience of parents from Southeastern Asia countries to discuss the special needs of handicapped children and the special education laws. The project involved literature published in several languages and a variety of interpreters present at the parents' meetings. As a preliminary step prior to the meeting, PACER and school district personnel met with a council of Southeast Asian community leaders to involve them in the effort and elicit their help in drawing out parents. The project will be continued next year.

PACER's philosophy is "parents helping parents". Most of the project's staff and consultants are themselves parents of handicapped children. The project aims to make parents more effective advocates for their children and encourages them to work closely with the schools in planning appropriate educational programs for their children.

This report provides a description of the activities of the sixth year of PACER's program components. The period covered in the report is June 1, 1983 through May 31, 1984. The purposes of this evaluation are to help PACER Center discover methods to improve its services to parents of handicapped children and to assist other organizations in developing parent training projects.

# SECTION ONE

## PARENT TRAINING PROJECT

### Summary of Evaluation of PACER's Parent Training Project 1983-1984

Through its five levels of parent training activities in 1983-84, PACER Center served approximately 9,300 people.

Those served included: 1,600 persons who attended Level I presentations; 586 who attended Level II workshops; 651 in attendance at Level III workshops; 108 who attended Level IV workshops; and 6,292 mail and phone contacts from persons seeking information and guidance.

#### LEVEL I - PUBLIC INFORMATION:

Persons in all areas of Minnesota were potentially reached by newspaper articles and TV or radio announcements again in 1983-84. In addition, several national publications published articles about the PACER organization and/or its materials. A major development noted this year was the extensive reprinting of PACER-authored articles in the publications of other organizations, both in Minnesota and on the national level. PACER continued to also reach thousands of other persons through presentations (35) made to various types of audiences.

#### LEVELS II, III, AND IV WORKSHOPS:

During 1983-84, 1,345 parents, professionals and others interested in special education attended PACER's 51 workshops (Levels II, III, and IV).

	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Level II (workshops for parents of handicapped children)	586
Level III (workshops for special audience groups)	651
Level IV (advocacy training workshops)	108
Total at 51 workshops	1,345

Conversations with persons at the workshops and "follow-up" phone calls made to parents who'd received PACER's training revealed a strong majority who believed the information gained was helpful, relevant, applicable to their situations, and well presented.

Of the twenty-five persons contacted for a "follow-up" survey, 96% of the parents said the workshop information was of use to them; 100% expressed more confidence in dealing with schools because of the workshop; and 64% said their child had either received better services because of information learned at the workshop.

#### LEVEL V - INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE:

Almost 6,300 people contacted PACER for information and assistance during 1983-84. Of the phone calls and letters, 3,951 persons were seeking information.



In addition to information, 1,800 persons sought help with individual advocacy concerns.

Twenty-five parents who had received PACER's help through a phone call were later contacted to learn how beneficial the help had been. Ninety-six percent said that they felt more confident about working with schools after speaking to Center staff persons; 80% said they didn't feel they could have received the assistance needed if PACER's services had not been available. Finally, 100% said the information received had been very (76%) or moderately (24%) helpful to them.

#### OTHER PARENT TRAINING:

Under a contract with the Minnesota Department of Education, PACER this year prepared materials and gave workshops to help implement the state's new rules on surrogate parents for handicapped children. PACER prepared an administrator's manual to help districts understand the new rules and their responsibilities in implementing surrogate parent programs and a flyer to be used in recruiting potential surrogates. Five workshops were presented throughout the state to discuss the new provisions with school administrators. Work was also begun by PACER on a comprehensive surrogate parent manual to be used by school districts in providing training for those appointed to this position.

PACER also continued its replication efforts, sending materials on its program, services, and form of organization to almost 1,000 callers and correspondents throughout the nation and in other countries. PACER co-directors also worked personally, either over the phone or in person, with groups seeking to form in other states.

# Evaluation of 1983-84 Activities

## Level I - Public information

PACER Center's public information efforts include programs to inform the general public about the educational rights of handicapped children, to inform parents of handicapped children about PACER Center's workshops and other services, and to inform educators and other interested groups and individuals about PACER Center's programs.

### I. Basic publicity

PACER's primary media mailing list is composed of all daily, weekly, and community newspapers; all radio and television stations in Minnesota; and all the state's handicap organizations' newsletters.

The most common media effort centers around publicizing the parent training workshops. If the workshops are held in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the PACER office sends releases to the local media. For rural-area workshops, sample releases are sent to people from the local group co-sponsoring the event; they then send the news out to their regional media outlets. In addition, for metro area workshops, PACER also contacts a variety of special education professionals: for example, special education directors, school social workers and preschool program coordinators. Finally, with the cooperation of Twin Cities television stations, public service announcements and community calendar notices are prepared to inform the public about the workshops and their purpose.

### II. National publicity

PACER also has a mailing list of publications that deal with special education concerns and that are distributed on a national level. News that may interest parents or educators nationwide (such as information about new booklets that PACER has available) is sent to these organizations.

An article that PACER had originally written for a magazine published by the city of Bloomington on knowledgeable parental involvement in the IEP process was reprinted in publications of the New York ARC and the National Society for Children and Adults with Autism. Information about PACER publications was carried by the EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED newsletter (a bi-weekly legislative newsletter that is distributed nationwide), the ACRES (American Council on Rural Special Education) national newsletter, EXCEPTIONAL PARENT magazine, the Sesame Street PARENTS' NEWSLETTER, and the national ACLD NEWSBRIEFS.

In addition, two articles written by and about PACER appeared in the COALITION QUARTERLY, a specialized journal that offers management information to organizations serving handicapped persons. One article dealt with fund raising among the private sector; a second discussed the essential involvement of

volunteers in the activities of non-profit organizations, particularly one like PACER Center.

### III. Other publicity

This year, PACER continued efforts to let the public know of the organization, not only as one that conducts workshops, but also as a continuing, ongoing source of information and training for parents.

A general announcement was prepared for television with the help of a local station; copies of the PSA (public service announcement) were then made and sent to all four of the local commercial channels where they were aired throughout the year. Two of the TV stations routinely send out statements that show the dollar value of the air time devoted to the PSA's; as an example, PACER received, on the average, the equivalent of \$2,120 of free publicity from just one station per month. When all four stations are taken into account, PACER receives over \$100,000 of free TV publicity each year.

This year, PACER began to remind PACESETTER and ADVOCATE readers that anyone reprinting articles from the newsletter should write first and receive permission to do so. As a result, PACER was able to keep better track of the eventual results of the dissemination of its articles and found that many groups have been using articles that originally appeared in PACER's newsletters, resulting in a greatly enlarged audience of readers. Interestingly, those who have reprinted articles have included special education departments of school districts who, in two cases, used the material for in-service trainings of professionals.

Another important reprint was that of a PACER article which explained the key ramifications of the state's new special education rules and appeared in one of the metro area's largest advocacy newspapers.

A second article that attracted local attention was the one mentioned in the national publicity section above, i.e., information about parental involvement in the IEP process. Written by PACER for the community services office of a metro area suburb, the article was sent to other parent organizations and reprinted by several groups.

A special news release was written specifically for and distributed to all the daily and weekly newspaper throughout Minnesota on the goals and values of general parent involvement in the entire education process.

One publicity project begun last year brought results this year: the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics had a story on PACER and its services in its newsletter which goes to over 300 member doctors. The article informed readers about the ways in which pediatricians could use PACER, particularly as a referral for parents of newly-born, handicapped infants. The chapter's president also took charge of mailing PACER flyers to chapter members for display in their offices.

Finally, PACER has developed an ongoing relationship with the editor of PARENTING, a local magazine that's distributed free in the area's doctor offices, hospitals, community centers, etc., and with a columnist for the MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE who writes about parenting issues. PARENTING has carried two stories about PACER services, and the columnist from the TRIBUNE has acknowledged PACER as a source for referrals and information.

#### IV. Summary of results

Those publicity efforts whose results can be measured together generated a total of:

225 newspaper/newsletter stories (99 in rural area newspapers; 110 in the metro area; and 17 in national or out-of-state publications)

1 general TV public service announcement about PACER services (run on a continuing basis on four stations)

radio station announcements about workshops

television announcements about workshops

#### V. Non-media public information programs

PACER also seeks to reach the public directly with information about their services.

Flyers and newsletters were displayed at several large conferences held for varying audiences, both in the metro area and in rural-area cities.

In Minnesota, PACER staff members made 35 presentations to various groups requesting information about the Center's programs and the parental role in special education. More than 1,600 persons attended the presentations; they included medical and educational professionals; business leaders; university students; and the State Board of Education.

#### VI. Conclusions

Once again, Minnesotans in all regions of the state were potential recipients of information about PACER and its services since news releases and radio announcements were distributed and published or aired in all the state's geographical areas. Hence, the goals of reaching 5,000 persons through the media and 500-800 through staff presentations (as expressed in PACER's federal grant application) were far exceeded.

Important developments in PACER's publicity program this year include both the variety of articles that appeared about the Center and its publications in magazines or newsletters with national or semi-national distribution and in the widespread re-printing of PACER-authored articles in the publications of other groups.

# Evaluation of 1983-84 Activities

## Level II - Workshops for All Parents

## Level III - Workshops for Special Groups

### PURPOSE

PACER Center conducted a total of 17 Level II and 32 Level III workshops in 1983-84. Level II workshops are for all parents of handicapped children; Level III workshops are for special groups of parents, such as those whose children are preschool age or have a particular disability.

The content in both types of workshops focuses on parents' and children's rights in special education, with information on assessment, parent involvement in planning individualized education programs (IEPs), advocacy, and parent-school communications. Participants at PACER workshops receive a packet of information, which contains material on special education laws.

Four Level II workshops were given on communication skills - a workshop devoted to teaching parents how to communicate more effectively and comfortably with their children's schools. Though no individual rural region in the state was singled out in 1983-84 as a pilot project area, PACER did again seek to give its regular Level II workshops in all geographical areas of the state: rural, small city, and larger metropolitan area. Also, PACER continued to make special efforts to reach parents from minority populations.

### SUMMARY OF LEVEL II AND III WORKSHOPS

#### LEVEL II

The 17 Level II workshops were attended by 586 persons, including 435 (74%) who were parents of handicapped children. (PACER's projected goal in its federal grant was to reach 300 to 400 persons at 8-13 workshops. Eight of these workshops were held outside the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. The 17 workshops were held throughout the state as indicated below:

#### GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

#### NO. OF WORKSHOPS

Regions 1 and 2	2
Region 3	3
Region 9	2
Region 10	1
Region 11E (St. Paul area)	3
Region 11W (Minneapolis area)	6
Total	17

### LEVEL III

The 32 Level III workshops were attended by 651 persons of whom 470 (72%) were parents of handicapped children. PACER Center's projected goals for 1983-84 in its federal grant were to reach 250 to 450 persons at 6 to 11 workshops. PACER responded to requests for all 32 workshops. Most of the workshops given this year were held in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The groups to whom PACER gave Level III workshops included a wide variety of interests, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds: young or new parents, parent groups organized through a hospital, foster parents, parents affiliated with a disability organization, and parents' groups organized in connection with a school.

### EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

At the end of all Level II and Level III workshops, participants were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire, and 420 participants out of 1,237 (32%) did so. The following information was from these questionnaires. When comments are recorded in this and following sections, they are selected because they are judged to be representative of most of the comments from participants.

### THE QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

#### 1. Who attended the workshops? (Number of questionnaires = 420)

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>
341	60%	Parent/relative of handicapped child
66	11%	*Other
57	10%	Regular educator or administrator
55	10%	Special educator or administrator
<u>50</u>	<u>9%</u>	Staff member of other agency
** 569	100%	Total

\*Examples of persons represented in the 'other' category are: social workers, students, aides, nurses, friends, volunteers, advocates and interpreters.

\*\*The total is greater than 420 because certain respondents indicated that they were parents of handicapped children and also were educators or staff members of agencies.

#### 2. What is the age of your handicapped child? (Number of questionnaires = 350)

<u>Age</u>	<u>No. of Children</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Birth to 3 years	37	10%
4-5	56	14%
6-11	140	36%
12-14	70	18%
15-18	51	13%
19-22	23	6%
Older	<u>10</u>	<u>3%</u>
Total	350	100%



3. What is your child's primary handicapping condition? (Number of questionnaires = 350)

Handicap	# of Children	% of Total
Learning disabilities (and behavior problems)	108	26%
Mental retardation	92	22%
Orthopedically impaired	75	18%
Hearing impaired	23	6%
Developmentally delayed	23	6%
Speech impaired	17	4%
Emotional disturbance	15	4%
Epilepsy	15	4%
Multiple handicaps	15	4%
Autism	5	1%
Other health impairments	5	1%
Vision impaired not listed	6	1%
Total	*411	100%

\*Some parents had more than one handicapped child

4. On the whole, how would you rate this workshop? (Number of questionnaires = 445)

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>	<u>Category</u>
216	48%	Excellent
195	44%	Very Good
32	8%	Good
2	0%	Fair
0	0%	Poor
445	100%	Total

5. Have you learned anything new? (Number of questionnaires = 416)

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>	<u>Category</u>
386	93%	YES
11	3%	NO
19	4%	NO RESPONSE
416	100%	TOTAL

6. Has this workshop helped you understand what to do if you are not satisfied with your child's education? (Number of questionnaires = 381)

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>	<u>Category</u>
283	74%	YES
11	3%	NO
87	23%	NO RESPONSE
381	100%	TOTAL
	10	

7. How did you find out about this workshop? (Number of questionnaires = 386)

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>	<u>Category</u>
130	34%	PACER
99	25%	Flyer from school
51	13%	Friend
31	8%	Flyer from other organization
25	7%	Newspaper
23	6%	Parent Group
23	6%	*Other
4	4%	Radio/TV
386	100%	Total

\*Examples of additional sources included in the "Other" category are: teachers, social workers, physicians fellow workers and family member.

8. Would you like to receive special training to be an advocate for handicapped children? (Number of questionnaires = 392)

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>	<u>Category</u>
92	23%	YES
141	36%	NO
159	41%	NO RESPONSE
392	100%	TOTAL

9. List a few important things you have learned or parts you liked best.  
(Number of questionnaires = 390; number of items learned or liked = 684)

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Thing mentioned as learned or liked</u>
17%	I.E.P. (explanation; parent participation)
17%	Due process rights
16%	Legislation (federal and state)
12%	Assessment procedure
10%	Communication and assertiveness (especially approaching school and staff)
8%	Sharing and support shown by speakers and by other parents
5%	Basic information on use of computers for handicapped (also software and adaptive equipment)
3%	Workshop packet and resource information
3%	Reinforcement from past workshops
2%	Simulations and role-playing
2%	Importance of records
2%	Other (COUNT ME IN puppet presentations, terms, transportation issues, rights of schools)
1%	Funding information and implications
1%	Surrogates; assisting others
1%	Services of PACER
100%	Total



10. Do you have any suggestions for improving this workshop? (Number of questionnaires = 326; Number of none or no improvement needed: 162 (59%); Number of suggestions = 134)

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Suggestions Made</u>
20%	More time in general to cover topic
15%	Increase time allotted for small group discussions
8%	Other (have ice-breaker for opening; give specific examples and suggestions regarding mainstreaming; give pre-test when people arrive; advertise through media more)
7%	More time needed to discuss own child's problems
6%	Include educators or representatives from school for a more positive approach
6%	Organization; timing (more time for questions, less time on laws, parts too long or too short)
5%	Present workshop to: teachers for in-service training; to adopting parents; to students who will become teachers; to staff and parents of those in group homes)
5%	More time for role playing and analysis
5%	Computers; have more hands-on time; show children or handicapped using them; specific demonstrations for mental retardation or learning disabilities etc.; show more software
5%	Facilities; room arrangement (too cold, too hot, more monitors, better visibility, sit in circles)
4%	Have handouts with local/outlying resources, agencies and programs listed
3%	Breaks
3%	Have copies of laws available for handouts
2%	Give specific information on policies of various school districts
2%	Terminology too technical
2%	Ask people to leave (mothers with restless children; smokers)
2%	Don't defer questions because of time, address them as asked
100%	Total

11. What topics would you like for another workshop? (Number of questionnaires = 276; number of suggested topics = 151)

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Suggested Topics</u>
22%	Workshops designed to obtain specific information about handicaps (learning disabilities was mentioned often; others: mental retardation, hearing impaired, behavior, emotional; cerebral palsy; speech and language)
14%	Communication skills; assertiveness (with schools and with medical profession)
11%	Computers
10%	Legislation - Update and reviews
10%	Other (In-service for teachers, future teachers, seniors; motor and fitness development -- research, testing and recording to demonstrate growth; group homes; educational aids and toys in homes; support groups; sexual awareness and abuse of handicapped; special education for the non or limited

	English speaking student
9%	The young adult (what comes after high school for the handicapped; career planning; colleges; vocational training and rehabilitation
5%	I.E.P.; assessment; testing parent preparation
3%	Policies and services in particular school districts
3%	Buy handicap, age and location - services, agencies and programs available
3%	Preschool services
3%	COUNT ME IN puppet training
3%	Advocacy training
2%	The handicapped child and stress in the family
2%	Programs for handicapped in parks and in churches
100%	Total

#### OTHER COMMENTS:

"It was excellent. You are well informed, caring and handle groups very well. The transparencies are attractive. The physical arrangement was good. I intend to refer/bring more parents."

"I have received more information about the rights of handicapped in the first hour of this workshop than I have received from the schools during 20 years of teaching. I teach 12th grade and I have had blind, hearing impaired, mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed children in my classroom during these years."

"A lot of information not delivered laboriously; presenters very sensitive to audience, questions and were enthusiastic."

"Could have been here all day."

"I'm a person with epilepsy. Thirty years ago they made fun of us. We can make it. Thank you for your help."

"Well planned, good materials and visuals. Simulations useful."

"Top notch speakers--especially experienced."

"Keep up the good work."

"I learned that I am not alone with a child who has problems."

"Informed staff. I enjoyed the motivation to become involved as parent. Never a boring moment."

"Other people have the same problems and fears. You gave me confidence in the knowledge I have."

"I now have a better idea of how I will be able to help parents when I am an educator."

#### CONCLUSIONS - LEVEL II AND LEVEL III WORKSHOPS

Level II and III workshops were attended by 1,237 persons in 1983-84.

Participants continued to find the workshops relevant, informative, and extremely supportive in suggesting productive directions for them to take.

Increases in the percentage of parents (in attendance) of children in all categories older than 11 were noted this year. Also, 9% of the respondents, when asked to specify helpful information, noted the material that covered needs of students approaching transition age. This contrasts with no respondents who mentioned this material last year.

#### WORKSHOP LOCATIONS AND ATTENDANCE

The tables on this and the next page show the locations, dates, and numbers of participants at all Level II and III workshops. Following the tables is a map of Level II workshops, showing the towns in which they were held and the area from which participants were drawn to each workshop.

#### LEVEL II PACER WORKSHOPS - 1983/84

		PARENTS	PROFESSIONALS	TOTAL
1.	Thief River Falls 9-29-83	20	7	27
2.	Thief River Falls 9-30-83	16	14	30
3.	Faribault 10-15-83	26	11	37
4.	Fairmont 10-18-83	27	12	39
5.	Hibbing 10-27-83	37	10	47
6.	Mpls. 11-5-83	23	10	33
7.	Mpls. Comm. 11-19-83	22	0	22
8.	Robbinsdale 12-5-83	12	3	15
9.	Inver Hills College 2-13-84	17	0	17
10.	Inver Grove College 2-25-84	8	6	14
11.	St. Paul 3-13-84	39	18	57
12.	St. Frances 4-3-84	12	3	15
13.	Mpls. 4-10-84	22	9	31
14.	Duluth 5-2-84	40	9	49
15.	Duluth 5-3-84	33	2	35
16.	Mpls. Computer 5-14-84	58	27	85
17.	Mankato 5-15-84	23	10	33
TOTAL		435	151	586

# PACER Center's Level II Workshops - 1983-84

## Location and Attendance Areas

Minnesota's special education regions are indicated by the large numbers on the map. Areas of attendance at each of the 17 Level II workshops are indicated by the heavy lines on the map. The site of each workshop is named in the margins; the number following each site's name in parentheses indicates how many Level II workshops were given in that city or town.

Thief River Falls (2)

Hibbing (1)

Duluth (2)

Minneapolis area (6)  
St. Paul area (3)

Faribault (1)

Mankato (1)

Fairmont (1)

# LEVEL III PACER WORKSHOPS - 1983/84

			PARENTS	PROFESSIONALS	TOTAL
1.	Faribault	6-2-83	39	8	47
2.	Sheriffs Ranch ED	7-19-83	4	2	6
3.	ACLD Advocate Trng.	7-26-83	20	3	23
4.	Princeton	8-4-83	7	1	8
5.	Vision Impaired	8-13-83	3	8	11
6.	Mn ARC	8-26-83	19	11	30
7.	Hutchinson UCP	9-22-83	45	5	50
8.	Como School	10-12-83	7	1	8
9.	Lutheran Social Serv.	10-13-83	4	1	5
10.	Head Start Reg. Conf.	11-10-83	0	17	17
11.	Hastings Foster Parents	12-6-83	20	1	21
12.	Hennepin Cty Social Workers	12-7-83	3	14	17
13.	Roseville Public Schol	1-3-84	10	1	11
14.	Mpls. Children's Society	1-18-83	9	0	9
15.	Rochester Head Start	1-15-84	1	10	11
16.	Willmar	2-2-84	17	0	17
17.	Fraser School	2-7-84	12	0	12
18.	Dist. 287	2-23-84	18	7	25
19.	Franklin	2-23-84	10	4	14
20.	Nekton Little Canada	2-8-84	10	3	13
21.	ACLD Conference	3-2-84	13	3	16
22.	Red Wing	3-6-84	15	6	21
23.	Washburn Foster Parents	3-6-84	8	1	9
24.	St. Paul DAC	3-8-84	6	0	6
25.	Courage Center	3-10-84	30	4	34

26. Prior Lake DAC	3-12-84	8	2	10
27. MACLD	3-29-84	13	2	15
28. Mpls. S.E. Asian	3-29-84	70	15	85
29. Red Wing DAC	4-10-84	20	5	25
30. CEC Natl. Conf.	4-26-84	5	20	25
31. Corcoran Park South High	5-14-84	6	8 (28 students)	42
32. Mt. Plains RRC	5-17-84	18	18	36
TOTAL		470	181	651

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF PARENTS WHO RECEIVED  
PACER SERVICES DURING THE YEAR - WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

PURPOSE

In June 1984, telephone calls were made to 50 parents of handicapped children who received services from PACER Center during the year; 25 of them had attended Level II workshops and 25 had called the office for assistance with situations involving their own child or children. No professionals or advocates were included in this follow-up survey.

The purposes of these follow-up surveys were (1) to determine how, after a period of time, the participants evaluated the services they received, and (2) to determine whether parents were able to put to use the information they had received.

All the calls in the surveys were made by the same person, who was not a presenter at any of the workshops. The same questions were asked of all participants in each of the two categories.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF PARENTS WHO ATTENDED LEVEL II WORKSHOPS

The 25 parents were chosen randomly from registration lists of persons who attended 4 of PACER's Level II workshops. The following chart shows where the workshops were located.

<u>Workshop</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Number Interviewed</u>	<u>Workshop Date</u>
Fairmont	9	6	10-18-83
Hibbing	3	6	10-27-83
Inver Grove Hgts	11E	6	2-13-84
St. Paul	11E	7	3-13-84

Twelve parents (48% of those interviewed) lived in school districts outside the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. This breakdown corresponds to the distribution of the general population of Minnesota.

The ages and primary disabilities of the children of the survey respondents correspond generally with the ages and disabilities of the children of other parents with whom PACER has had contact, even though the survey participants were chosen randomly.

Following is a summary of responses to the questions asked in the telephone survey of parents who attended workshops.

1. Was any of the information presented at the workshop useful for you?

24	96%	YES
<u>1</u>	<u>4%</u>	NO
25	100%	Total

The most frequent comments related to information about laws, and the IEP. Many also mentioned the value of small group discussions, being provided with packets of materials they could refer to later, and their rights about seeing school records. The one person who already knew laws said he came to see PACER in action because he was thinking of starting a coalition in Wisconsin.

2. Are you more confident in dealing with schools because of information or support you have received from PACER Center?

25	100%	YES
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	NO
25	100%	Total

Most felt that knowing the laws, procedures, and their right to be involved gave them confidence that there was a place, PACER Center, where they could go for future assistance if needed.

Some comments made by workshop participants included:

"Can question school's recommendation because I learned I'm part of the team."

"Feel like now I know what I'm doing."

"When we knew where we stood regarding laws and rights, the district started listening to us."

"Knowing that there's someone available (PACER) when I have questions or concerns."

"Knowing that PACER is there has given me a lot of confidence."

3. Do you feel you have been more involved in your child's educational program since you attended the workshop?

14	56%	YES MORE INVOLVED
6	24%	HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INVOLVED, NO
<u>5</u>	<u>20%</u>	OTHER
25	100%	TOTAL

Of the 25 parents interviewed, 56% (14) are very involved in their handicapped

child's educational program. Five persons said "other" because their involvement remained the same; child in first grade and no real need to get more involved yet; and not sure if involvement has increased.

4. Has your child received better services because you have put workshop information to use?

16	64%	Have achieved better service
7	28%	No, or already had good services
<u>2</u>	<u>8%</u>	Other
25	100%	TOTAL

5. Child's Single Most Important Disability

Special learning problems and learning disabilities	8	27%
Speech and Language	3	10%
Orthopedically handicapped	8	27%
Mental retardation	7	24%
Autism	0	0%
Epilepsy	0	0%
Hyperactivity	1	3%
Emotionally disturbed	1	3%
Hearing impairment	1	3%
Developmentally Delayed	1	3%
Vision impairment	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	30	100%

6. Child's Ages

0-3	1	19%
4-5	6	3%
6-11	16	53%
12-14	4	13%
15-18	3	9%
19-21	1	3%
Over	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
Total	31	100%

CONCLUSION

PACER Level II workshops provided parents with useful information, both verbally and in printed materials. As a result, 100% of the 25 parents surveyed felt more confident dealing with schools, 80% are involved or plan to be actively involved in their children's programs, and 64% of the parents feel their children have achieved better special education services as a result of PACER's workshop.



# Evaluation of 1983-84 Activities

## Level IV – Training of Advocates

### PURPOSE

Level IV activities train persons to help conduct workshops on the special education laws for other parents of handicapped children and train persons to serve as advocates for parents of handicapped children. During 1983-84, PACER held two such training workshops, attended by a total of 108 persons. PACER had projected training 40-70 advocates in its federal grant. Workshop topics during the year included: computer use, federal update, minimum competency testing and other topics.

### EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

#### 1. Who attended the workshops? (Number of respondents = 88)

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>
31	35%	Parent of a handicapped child
49	56%	Staff person, board member, or volunteer for advocacy/consumer group, educator
7	8%	*Other
2	2%	No response
	**102%	Total

\*"Others" include students, school aids, therapists

\*\*Total is more than 100% because some participants were both parents and professionals.

#### 2. On the whole, how would you rate this workshop? Number of questionnaires = 88

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>
59	67%	Excellent
24	27%	Very good
2	2.5%	Good
2	2.5%	Fair
0	0%	Poor
1	1%	No response
88	100%	Total

#### 3. Did you learn anything new from attending this workshop? Number of questionnaires = 88

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Response</u>
86	98%	YES
1	1%	NO
1	1%	NO RESPONSE
88	100%	TOTAL

19

4. Please indicate a few things you learned or parts you liked best. Number of questionnaires = 88; number of items mentioned = 134; no response = 4.3% and percentages below based on 134.

<u>Percent</u>	<u>Response</u>
28%	Importance of microcomputers for special children
22%	Adaptive devices and software geared for handicapped
12%	Issues of competency based tests and diplomas for handicapped
9%	Vocational and preschool education legislation
5%	Complaint proces; due rights
4%	Laws
4%	Resources and obtaining information
4%	Specific programs to start with on the Apple computers
4%	Others (terms; surrogate parent issues; interest on loans available to buy computer; disc authorization; parents helping parents)
3%	Puppet, especially for secondary programs
3%	Speakers present
2%	Comfort level with computers

Level IV included two workshops, one of which dealt with computers.

5. Has this training session made you feel more self confident in your ability to advocate for the needs of handicapped children? Number of questionnaire = 88

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Response</u>
63	72%	YES
6	7%	NO
2	2%	UNDECIDED
17	19%	NO RESPONSE
88	100	TOTAL

6. Do you feel that the workshop packet will be useful to you? Number of questionnaire = 88

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Response</u>
72	82%	VERY USEFUL
8	9%	MODERATELY USEFUL
0	0%	NOT USEFUL
8	9%	NO RESPONSE
88	100%	TOTAL

7. What suggestions do you have for improving this workshop? Number of questionnaires = 88 Number of none or no responses (58) or (66%); Number of suggestions: 33. Percentage based on 33.

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Category</u>
18%	More time needed to cover topic in greater detail
15%	Hands-on computer experience
9%	More monitors for better visibility
9%	Outlines for computer segment
6%	Use handicapped people to demonstrate computers
6%	Have more books for sale
6%	Computer terminology - more definitions
6%	More on current laws; less on historical perspective
6%	Break in segments geared to specific handicaps, i.e. blind, deaf, learning disability, etc.
19%	Others (keep general public informed; show computer layout; more specific examples; jazz-up presentation; first section not relevant to this group.)
	Total

8. What topics would be of interest for future workshops? Number of questionnaires = 88.

33%	More computer workshops
15%	Update on legislative issues
9%	Vocational trends and job opportunities for handicapped
9%	Workshop special on learning disabilities
34%	Others (one comment each) workshop special on vision, mental retardation or ED, preschoolers, Hmong; how to make use of the volunteers in school for handicapped children; setting up own center to aid parents with computer needs, parent needs and feelings; bring your own child workshop; starting your own school for handicapped.

9. Other Comments

Among the additional comments offered by many respondents were the following:

"Truly one of the most informative workshops I've been to for a long time"

"Speakers were very knowledgeable, articulate and interesting"

"Opens up a whole new world of learning for me to use in early intervention - very exciting."

"Excellent. PACER is doing a job that is necessary."

"You do a great job of keeping us current. Thank you."

"Could have been here all day."

"This workshop is outstanding gives the parent the knowledge (instead of only professionals) in this rapidly exploding area. Another example of parents helping parents. I'm impressed."

"The puppets were great, of course."

"Most topical; the information was well presented and I feel I learned from the program."

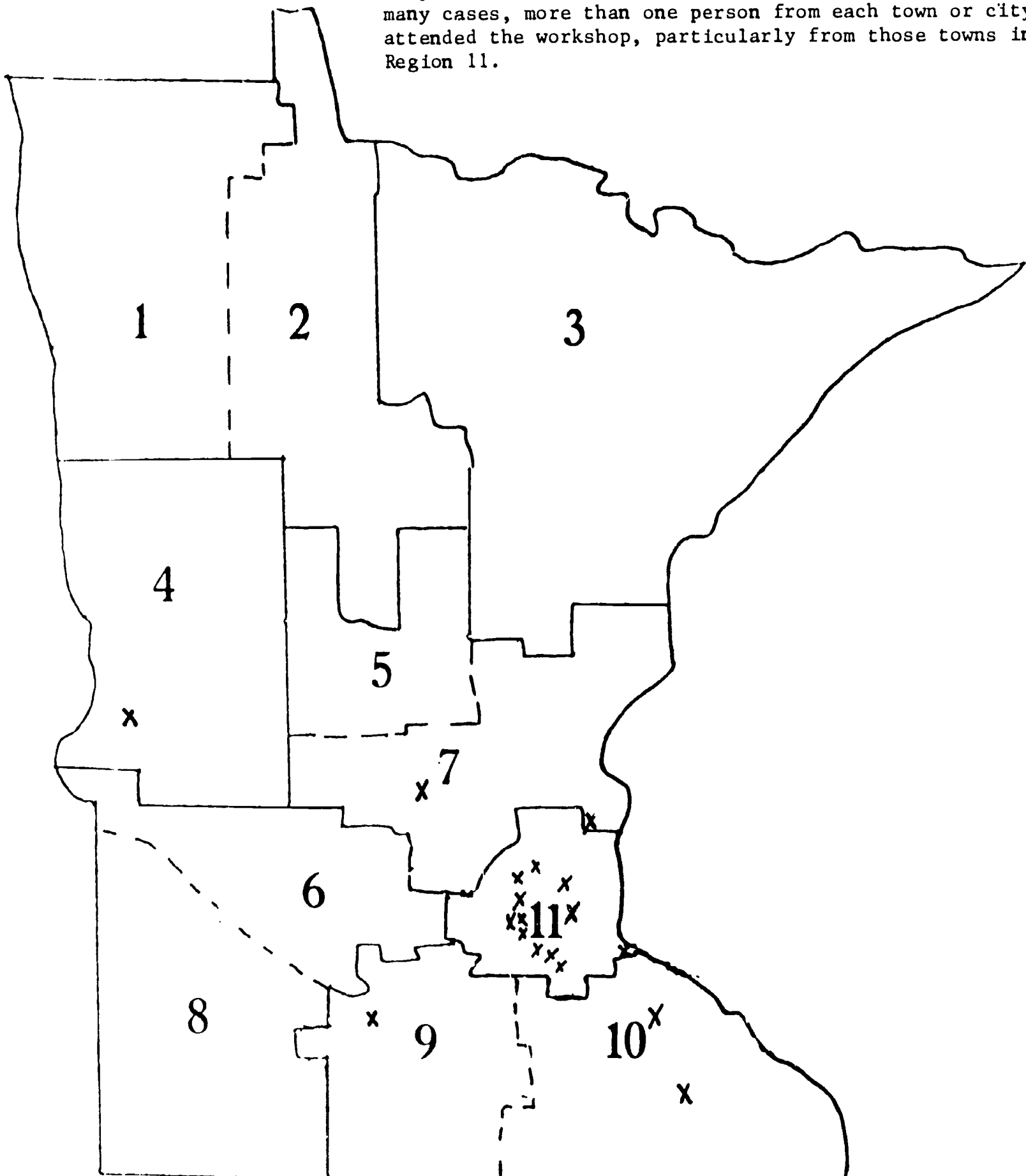
"As a law student and with a handicapped member of the family learned some things which will help in both capacities."

LEVEL IV - NUMBERS OF POPE ATTENDING EACH WORKSHOP  
JUNE 1, 1983 - MAY 31, 1984

		PARENTS	PROFESSIONALS	TOTAL
1. Mpls.	12-9-83	11	8	19
2. Mpls. (Computer)	2-2-84	50	39	89
TOTAL		66	47	108

# REGIONAL REPRESENTATION OF LEVEL IV PARTICIPANTS, 1983-84

The X's on the map show the towns or cities of residence of persons who took Level IV training in 1983-84. In many cases, more than one person from each town or city attended the workshop, particularly from those towns in Region 11.



# Evaluation of 1983-84 Activities

## Level V - Individual Assistance

### PURPOSE

During the 12 month period beginning June 1, 1983, PACER received 6,292 telephone and mail communications from parents of handicapped children, professionals, and others. These communications included requests for general information or referral inquiries about workshops or other presentations and requests for individual advocacy assistance.

PACER does not have a toll free number but it encourages parents outside the Twin Cities area to call collect.

### SUMMARY OF TELEPHONE AND MAIL COMMUNICATIONS

#### 1. How many communication intakes were received each month?

<u>Month(s)</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Advocate Organizations</u>	<u>Professionals</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
June-July 83	281	120	251	25	677
August	180	61	116	14	371
September	213	77	168	23	481
October	325	66	257	33	681
November	274	61	181	8	524
December	260	43	147	10	460
January 1984	343	64	243	26	676
February	283	53	192	26	554
March	322	53	214	27	616
April	356	55	254	26	691
May	<u>309</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>181</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>561</u>
Total	3,146	697	2,204	245	6,292
	(50%)	(11.1%)	(35%)	(3.9%)	(100%)

"Parents" include parents and other relatives of handicapped children, foster parents, and group home houseparents. "Professionals" include primarily school district and regional educational personnel. "Advocates" include representatives of disability organizations, legal advocates, and persons who have taken PACER advocacy training. Many of the advocates are parents of handicapped children, but they were counted as advocates when their inquiry dealt with children other than their own.

#### 2. Where do people live who contact PACER?

Minnesota is divided into planning regions that are also used as special education administrative regions. All 12 regions of Minnesota were represented in the 6,292 communication calls or letters PACER received.

### Total Communication Intakes by Regions

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
West Metro: Mpls. 11W	2,684	42.7%
East Metro: St. Paul 11E	1,400	22.3%
Southeast - Region 10	237	3.7%
South Central - Region 9	189	3.0%
Southwest - Region 8	98	1.6%
Central - Region 7	220	3.5%
West Central - Region 6	80	1.3%
North Central - Region 5	66	1.1%
West - Region 4	65	1.0%
Northeast - Region 3	147	2.3%
Northwest - Region 2	43	.6%
Far Northwest - Region 1	106	1.7%
Out of State	906	14.4%
Out of Country	23	.2%
Total	6,264	100%

### 3. What information and education services were requested?

Of the total 6,292 telephone and mail intakes, 3,951 (62.7%) included requests for information and education. (Many intakes included more than one type of request and would be included in data for other "levels" as well.) These information and education intakes include a variety of types of requests, as indicated below.

#### Intake

Information and referral	2,056	52.0%
Information on PACER	1,455	36.8%
Other (laws, etc.)	220	5.6%
Speech/conference requests	89	2.3%
Replication materials	46	1.2%
Media	30	.8%
Meet with PACER staff	55	1.2%
Total	3,951	100%

### 4. How did people learn about PACER's services? (Number who indicated source = 522)

<u>Source of information about PACER</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Advocacy organizations	112	21.5%
PACER workshops	84	16.1%
School personnel, preschool/DAC	79	15.1%
Friends/relatives	58	11.1%
Agencies serving handicapped persons	45	10.4%
Medical personnel	42	8.1%
TV, radio	36	6.9%
Government personnel	34	6.5%
PACER staff/board	34	6.5%
PACER brochure/newsletter/speech	9	1.7%
Newspaper	5	1.0%
Other	3	.6%
Total	522	100%

Of the 6,292 persons who contacted PACER Center, 522 (8.3%) indicated how they learned about the organization. It should be pointed out that many of the year's intakes are from persons who had been in contact with PACER before, and those persons were not usually asked how they learned about the organization. Also, letters frequently do not include this information.

5. Of the total Level V requests, how many were for individual advocacy assistance?

One thousand eight hundred (28.6%) of the total 6,292 telephone and mail intakes to PACER Center included inquiries classified as "individual advocacy." These included questions relating to the educational needs of individual children. A large number of inquiries focused on the content and planning of IEP's; other questions dealt with: preschool programs, assessments, transportation issues, and the right of parents to see school records.

6. Distribution by sex of child whose parent is calling

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Female	356	33%
Male	724	67%
Total	1,080	100%

7. Distribution by age of child of parent calling (Number responding = 1,035)

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Birth-3	92	8.8%
4-5	133	12.9%
6-11	402	38.8%
12-14	195	18.8%
15-18	173	16.7%
19-21	28	2.7%
Over 22	12	1.2%
Total	1,035	100%

8. Primary disability of the children (Number responding = 976)

<u>Disability</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
SLBP (includes learning disabilities, behavior problems and hyperactivity)	258	26.4%
Mental retardation and developmentally delayed	236	24.2%
Physically handicapped	132	13.5%
Emotionally disturbed	95	9.7%
Hearing impairments	67	6.9%
Speech/language	45	4.6%
Multiple handicaps	36	3.7%
Autism	36	3.7%
Vision	33	3.4%
Other health impairments	30	3.1%
Gifted	2	0.2%
Total	976	100%



### Conclusion - Level V

PACER's 1983-84 intake of mail and telephone inquiries increased by 16 percent over that of 1982-83. The continuing increase in intake is evidence, PACER believes, of the ongoing need for a source for parent information.

#### FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF PARENTS WHO RECEIVED INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE

A follow-up survey was conducted by telephone with 25 parents who had received assistance from PACER by telephone with a question related to the education of their handicapped child. Respondents were selected to be generally representative of all callers in terms of age and disability of children and regions of the state. Parents were selected on a stratified random basis.

1. How helpful was the information you received on the telephone?  
(Number = 25)

19	76%	Very Helpful
6	24%	Moderately helpful
0	0	Slightly helpful
0	0	Not at all helpful
25	100%	Total

All of the respondents to this question were asked the reason for their responses. Some of the most common answers were: received clear answers to their questions, received printed information, received supportive help that addressed my particular problem.

Some specific comments were:

"From PACER I got the specific information I needed."

"Got my questions answered."

"We were going through some trauma with our son's education programs and the information we received was very helpful."

"Helped us in knowing what to put on the IEP."

"I got very valid advice - I didn't know where to turn for knowledgeable information--the center was a big help."

2. Did you feel more confident in your ability to work with the schools after speaking to PACER Center? (Number = 25)

24	96%	YES
0	0%	NO
1	4%	OTHER
25	100%	TOTAL

Some specific comments about parents' feelings and confidence included:

"I found out that I could be a part of the decisions."

"I got moral support which I needed."

"Having information about what to do really helped."

"Now we know what our rights are."

"Having written material to refer back to was very helpful."

"PACER is very professional and when you call for advice you're backed up."

3. Has the information you received enabled you to obtain at least some of the services you feel your child needs? (Nubmer = 25)

19	76%	YES
3	12%	NO
<u>3</u>	<u>12%</u>	OTHER--not yet, cnild out because ill
25	100%	TOTAL

Those answering negatively made such comments as "still trying" or "problem didn't bloom out like I thought it might."

Some specific comments from those who said YES were:

"Now we have an educational program that meets my daughter's needs. A full day program and more individualized IEP."

"The district wanted to transfer my son to another school. We were able to keep that from happening."

4. Do you feel that you could have received the assistance you needed if PACER services had not been available? (Number = 25)

3	12%	YES
20	80%	NO
<u>2</u>	<u>8%</u>	OTHER
25	100%	TOTAL

Comments from parents who said they felt they could not have received assistance elsewhere included:

"I think we got what our daughter needed because PACER was involved."

"I hadn't gotten any information before my call to PACER."

"Glad PACER's there! Hope you don't ever go away."

"No place else that we knew of could answer our questions"

"We would not have known where to turn if PACER weren't there."

"Appreciate so much that someone could attend the conference with us."

5. In the telephone contact you had with PACER, did you feel that the suggestions for action were possible for you to carry out?

YES	24	96%
NO	1	4%
OTHER	0	0%

Comments from parents were:

"Everything was explained step by step and made very clear. I knew I could always call with more questions."

"Suggestions were very feasible."

"Pretty cut and dry--very easy to follow and understand."

6. If a PACER person attended a staffing or conference with you, was it useful or helpful to you and your child?

13	50%	No, did not attend staffing
<u>12</u>	<u>50%</u>	Yes, attended a staffing or conference
25	100%	Total

Of the 12 persons who attended a staffing or conference, comments were as follows:

10	27%	Very helpful
2	6%	Moderately helpful

CONCLUSION

PACER's parent training project reached thousands of people during 1983-84. Goals for the project were exceeded. The evaluations indicate that parents rated PACER's services very high.

If the random sampling of 25 parents is indeed representative of the whole, PACER information and assistance is very helpful to parents, PACER gives parents the confidence to work toward appropriate education for their children, and the majority of parents do succeed in getting the services they feel their children need.

# SECTION TWO

## COUNT ME IN

### Background and Introduction

COUNT ME IN, a project of PACER Center, trains volunteers to provide educational programs about people with handicaps to preschool, elementary, and secondary age students. The COUNT ME IN project seeks to foster positive attitudes about handicapped people and to dispel myths and fears children and adults have regarding disabilities. PACER began the COUNT ME IN project in June 1979 under a two year grant from the Department of Personnel Preparation (DPP), United States Office of Special Education. It has continued during 1981-84 under a three year grant from DPP as well as with grants from private corporations and foundations. Grants were received for 1983-84 from the Bremer Foundation to conduct training sessions in three rural communities, and from the National Easter Seal Society to present secondary programs to 7th - 9th grade students.

The COUNT ME IN program was initiated in response to concern of PACER's Board of Directors and many parents that nonhandicapped children need to become more knowledgeable about disabilities and more accepting of their peers who had handicaps. PACER felt initially that a program was needed to help educate children and to assist schools in their efforts to implement programs in the least restrictive environment for handicapped children, and more recently, that programs for secondary students needed to be developed.

COUNT ME IN seeks to accomplish its goals through four levels of activity. This evaluation report summarizes these levels of service. They are as follows:

LEVEL I - PUBLIC INFORMATION - to inform the general public about the needs of handicapped people and about the COUNT ME IN project.

LEVEL II - VOLUNTEER TRAINING - to inform and train parents, handicapped persons, secondary students and other interested people about special education laws, various disabilities, techniques of puppet show presentations, and various awareness projects for students.

LEVEL III - TRAINERS AND REPLICATION - to offer ongoing assistance to past trainees, and to train cadres of volunteers in other areas of the state to replicate the COUNT ME IN project which will result in reaching greater numbers of children with handicap awareness information. Outside grants also contributed to COUNT ME IN activities in this level.

LEVEL IV - PUPPET SHOW PRESENTATIONS - to reach children in elementary schools

with information about the needs and abilities of handicapped students. With outside grants the COUNT ME IN project was also able to reach secondary students in grades 7-9.

### INTRODUCTION TO PUPPET PRESENTATIONS

A brief description of the puppet shows presented to elementary schools is included here because it is helpful to understand the messages that COUNT ME IN presents to children as a background to the public information and training components of the project.

COUNT ME IN uses six large hand and rod puppets and has created preschool and elementary scripts and most recently junior high scripts. The disabilities represented include mental retardation, deafness, blindness, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, epilepsy, and learning disabilities. Puppets interact with and ask questions of each other to help children learn.

Presentations are given in elementary classes, using all of the six puppets, and in secondary schools, using two to four puppets at a time. The puppeteers (COUNT ME IN staff and volunteers who have participated in training sessions) operate and speak for the puppets.

The puppets ask each other questions about their handicaps; the questions are the basic, frank ones students often ask. The capabilities of individuals with handicaps are stressed. The handicapped and nonhandicapped puppets find they have interests in common, and the handicapped puppets tell how they compensate for their handicaps or have learned to use special equipment and aids.

Frequently during the shows, the puppeteers ask the students in the audience questions that help them identify with common experiences that they share with handicapped children and teenagers.

At various points in the program, members of the audience are encouraged to ask questions. The puppeteers stay in character, so the students feel they are talking to the puppets rather than to adults. As a part of each program, elementary and secondary students have the opportunity to inspect such items as a white cane, a wheelchair, braille games, and a hearing aid. At the end of the elementary program, the COUNT ME IN staff, volunteers, and puppets ask the children to join them in singing the COUNT ME IN song:

Maybe we don't all walk the same,  
Maybe we don't all talk the same,  
But all people want to say,  
COUNT ME IN!

## Summary of Evaluation of COUNT ME IN Project 1983-84

During 1983-84, PACER Center's COUNT ME IN project reached more than 15,000 people directly, many more than had been anticipated in the projected goals for the year.

This includes 2,190 who attended programs and presentations, 123 participants in volunteer training, nearly 11,500 students and 450 teachers who saw the COUNT ME IN elementary school presentations, 1,789 secondary students and 55 teachers who viewed secondary programs, and 800 persons who contacted PACER for COUNT ME IN information. Added to the 50,500 persons reached the first four years of the COUNT ME IN project, PACER Center has involved a total of 60,000 individuals in handicap awareness since the inception of COUNT ME IN in 1979.

#### LEVEL I - PUBLIC INFORMATION

Considerable effort was made in 1983-84 to inform the public about the COUNT ME IN project. The general public was informed about the project and made more aware of the needs and abilities of handicapped children through newspaper, radio, and TV publicity in the Twin Cities and outstate areas; through articles in publications of advocacy organizations and agencies; and through distribution of more than 10,000 brochures. In addition, 22 in-service and other presentations about the project were conducted, reaching more than 2,190 persons during 1983-84.

The specific target audiences of the project's public information efforts during the early years were potential volunteers to assist with handicap awareness programs and school personnel who might be interested in scheduling puppet shows. During 1981-83 COUNT ME IN began giving more emphasis to reaching other professionals about the importance of handicap awareness, and during 1983-84, further enhanced these efforts not only on handicap awareness and the abilities of disabled children, but also on the vulnerability of handicapped children to child abuse. Presentations were given to persons in the medical, recreational and business professions, in addition to the educational field.

#### LEVEL II - TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

A total of 123 persons participated in COUNT ME IN training as volunteers for puppet show presentations and for other handicap awareness programs during 1983-84. The trainings included seven held in Minnesota and one in another state. Two of the sessions were made possible by a grant from the Bremer Foundation. Included in the training was information about disabilities, children's rights in special education, and techniques of puppetry.

The effectiveness of the volunteer training is indicated by the evaluation of participants. Ninety-eight percent of the participants, in response to a survey following the training sessions, rated the sessions as either excellent or good. More than three-fourths of the trainees in Minnesota indicated that they planned to present puppet shows as a means of handicap awareness and many were planning to develop other kinds of handicap awareness programs. The participants' evaluations showed that the training sessions made them feel confident about developing future activities relating to children's questions and concerns about disabilities.

In addition to the evaluation conducted immediately after the training sessions, COUNT ME IN surveyed, near the end of the year, the trainees from the first five trainings to determine their opinion of the training after a period of time and to discover what kinds of awareness programs they had been involved in since taking the training. The trainees gave high ratings to the content of the training sessions and 97% stated the training information had been useful to them.



### LEVEL III - TRAINING OF TRAINERS AND REPLICATION

During 1983-84, five sites involved in Level II trainings were given additional help to continue trainings and to replicate the COUNT ME IN project. Ashland, Wisconsin, and Alexandria, Montevideo, Pipestone and St. Cloud, Minnesota, have replicated the COUNT ME IN project and have persons who have become trainers through the specialized training and assistance they received from COUNT ME IN.

### LEVEL IV - PRESENTATIONS

During 1983-84, 118 programs were presented in 50 schools for 11,560 students and approximately 462 teachers. Additional funding was received from private sources to assist in reaching more children. Each year many requests for school presentations have had to be declined because of COUNT ME IN's budget and staff limitations.

Ratings of the presentations, both by children and by adults, have been overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-nine percent of the teachers who saw the puppet shows rated them as excellent or very good; 81% said that the majority of children in their classes demonstrated positive changes in attitude after seeing the COUNT ME IN program. Of the 4-6 graders who completed evaluations, 96% said that they liked the shows. In addition, 93% of the students indicated they learned something new about handicapped children, and 94% felt better after the program about relating to children with disabilities.

With funding from the National Easter Seal Society during 1983-84, COUNT ME IN also provided specialized training to seven volunteers about presenting information and programs to 7th, 8th, and 9th graders. Four teams (one each for visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical handicap and mentally retarded) presented 53 programs to 1,789 students. PACER also developed a 36 page Secondary School Supplement to the Resource Manual and distributed the supplement to trainees and teachers. Students received the 16 page booklet Disabled? Yes. Able? Also Yes. which was developed by PACER to illustrate capabilities of teenagers with handicaps.

This evaluation continues to confirm the need for increased hand'cap awareness activities. The unexpectedly large number of requests for COUNT ME IN presentations indicates that educators are interested in and supportive of the concept of sensitizing children to the needs of persons with handicaps. PACER Center hopes to continue to investigate ways to respond to this interest and to meet this need.

PACER Center believes that COUNT ME IN has been successful in training volunteers and informing many children and teachers about the needs and abilities of people with handicaps.

## Evaluation of 1983-84 Activities

### Level I - Public Information

#### PURPOSE

The COUNT ME IN project attempts to achieve two main goals through its public

information efforts: (1) to inform the general public of the needs and capabilities of handicapped individuals and (2) to distribute information about the COUNT ME IN project.

#### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

These two goals were achieved in the following ways:

1. News releases about COUNT ME IN training programs were distributed to:
  - a. Weekly and daily neighborhood newspapers throughout the area surrounding Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.
  - b. Newsletters of disability groups, school related organizations, and civic and community organizations such as Scouts and park programs in the state of Minnesota.
2. Feature articles about COUNT ME IN presentations were printed in school publications and neighborhood newspapers. Several publications of disability organizations and teacher groups included articles and pictures about COUNT ME IN programs.
3. National articles about COUNT ME IN appeared in three publications, Coalition Quarterly, Exceptional Parent, distributed nationally, and Special Perceptions distributed in Washington state as well as in other areas.
4. More than 6,000 COUNT ME IN brochures were distributed to various disability groups, teacher organizations, medical groups, civic and community groups. In addition, a letter about the puppet show was given to the children who viewed the presentation at their school, so they could share the information with their parents.
5. Articles about COUNT ME IN appeared in each of the three PACESETTER newsletters printed by PACER in 1983-84. Each issue reached more than 11,000 parents and professionals.
6. PACER staff presentations about COUNT ME IN and the importance of handicap awareness efforts were given to more than 22 groups which included community organizations; disability groups; in-service training sessions for teachers, medical personnel, and other professionals who work with handicapped children; and university classes. More than 2,190 persons were reached through the presentations.

#### CONCLUSION - LEVEL I

A high level of interest in handicap awareness has continued through public information efforts during 1983-84. Thousands of people were reached through extensive public information. The project had hoped to reach at least 4,000 people during 1983-84 under Level I, and this goal was exceeded. It is anticipated that public information about COUNT ME IN will help the general public become more aware of the needs and abilities of individuals with handicaps.



# Evaluation of 1983-84 Activities

## Level II - Volunteer Training Workshops

Under Level II, volunteers receive training to present information on handicapping conditions to students. In 1983-84, COUNT ME IN held eight training sessions, attended by a total of 123 persons. Two were held under the Office of Special Education grant. Two other training sessions for 20 persons were funded by a grant from the Bremer Foundation and were held in Alexandria, Minnesota, and Washburn, Wisconsin. The Greater Minneapolis Girl Scouts provided funds for COUNT ME IN to train 13 girls ages 12-16 to give puppet programs to local troops. COUNT ME IN had proposed to train between 40 and 70 volunteers during 1983-84 under a federal grant.

### TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

The content of the Level II training sessions included information on disabilities, feelings of handicapped people, aids and appliances, and resources for and about disabled persons; suggestions on ways to respond to questions students most commonly ask regarding handicaps; techniques of puppetry; and information on Public Law 94-142 with emphasis on the right of handicapped children to be educated in the least restrictive environment. Each training session was conducted over a two or two and one-half day period.

Presenters at the training workshops included persons with disabilities, parents of handicapped children, representatives of disability organizations, educators, and members of the PACER staff. Various methods of providing information were used such as lectures, small group discussions, audio-visual materials and actual puppet presentations to small audiences.

Each workshop participant received a 106 page COUNT ME IN Resource Manual which contains extensive information on disabilities, the laws, and various resource materials. Trainees for secondary programs received the 36 page Secondary School Supplement to the Resource Manual.

A total of 123 persons participated in the eight 1983-84 training workshops. The participants represented a variety of backgrounds, as well as geographical areas. The following tables show these differences:

<u>VOLUNTEERS</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Parents of regular education students	23	19%
Parents of special education students	18	15%
Educators	15	12%
Girl Scouts age 12-16	13	11%
*Other	32	26%
Not indicated by participants	<u>22</u>	<u>17%</u>
Total	123	100%

Areas of Minnesota from which participants in COUNT ME IN Volunteer training came.

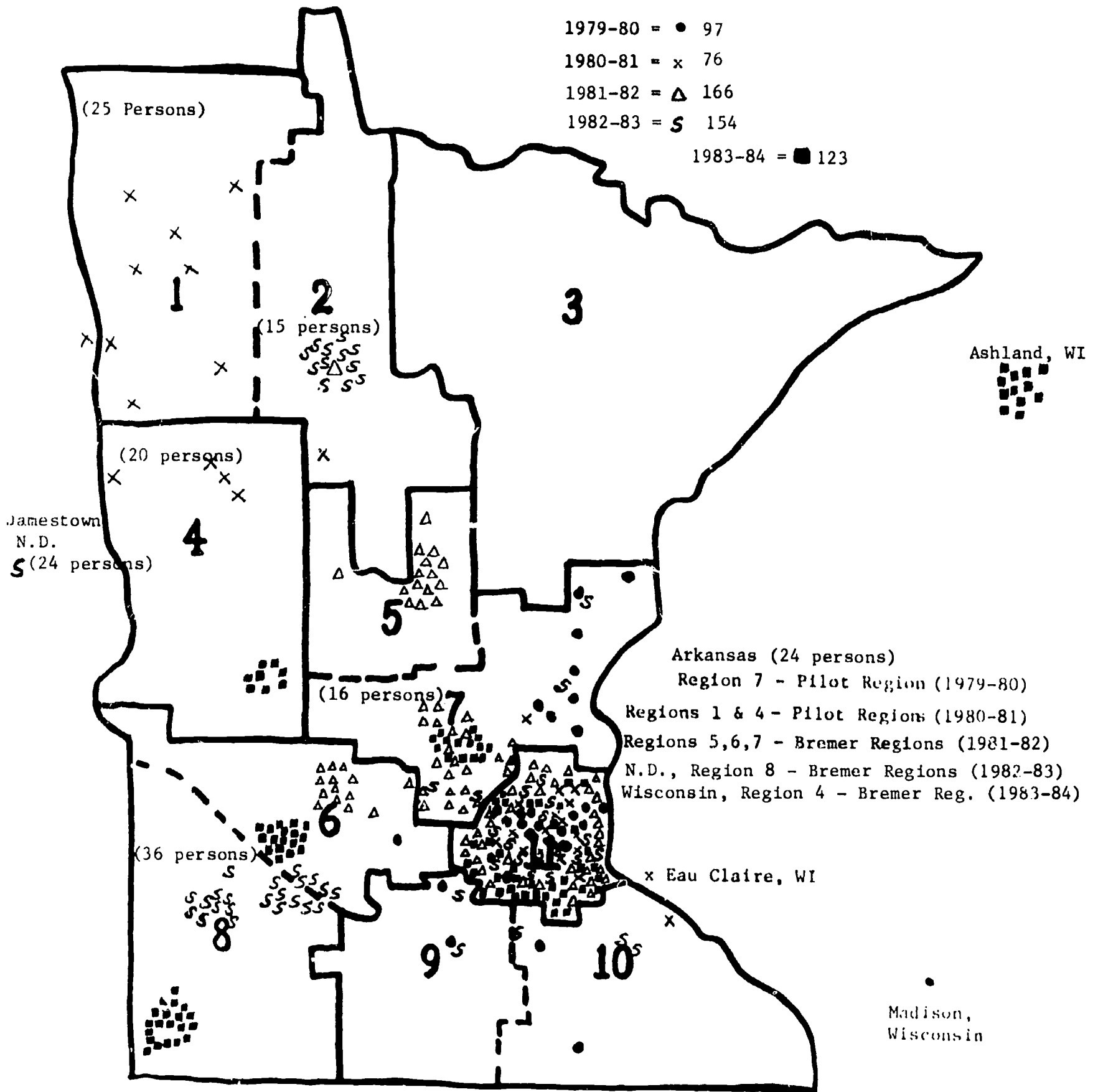
1979-80 = • 97

1980-81 = x 76

1981-82 = Δ 166

1982-83 = S 154

1983-84 = ■ 123



\*(Medical personnel (nurses, O.T.), representatives of disability organizations, college students, etc.)

### EVALUATION OF VOLUNTEER TRAINING

At the conclusion of each training, participants were requested to complete an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the overall training. One hundred and six (86%) of the 123 participants returned the survey. The following questions were asked:

1. How much do you feel this training has increased or expanded your positive attitudes about disabled persons? (No. = 106)

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
VERY	73	69%
MODERATELY	22	21%
SLIGHTLY	9	9%
POOR	0	0
NO ANSWER	<u>2</u>	<u>2%</u>
TOTAL	106	100%

2. From the information you received at this training, how comfortable do you feel in encouraging in others positive attitudes toward disabled persons? (Number = 106)

VERY	70	74%
MODERATELY	28	26%
SLIGHTLY	1	1%
POOR	0	0
NO ANSWER	<u>3</u>	<u>3%</u>
TOTAL	106	100%

3. How sufficient was the information you received at the training for answering basic questions about handicapping conditions? (Number = 106)

VERY	84	79%
MODERATELY	21	20%
SLIGHTLY	0	0
POOR	0	0
NO ANSWER	<u>1</u>	<u>1%</u>
TOTAL	106	100%

4. How comfortable do you feel about relating to children's questions and concerns about handicapping conditions? (No. = 106)

VERY	41	39%
MODERATELY	61	58%
SLIGHTLY	4	3%
POOR	0	0
NO ANSWER	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	106	100%

5. How well informed do you feel about techniques of puppetry? (No.=106)

VERY	36	34%
MODERATELY	48	45%
SLIGHTLY	3	3%
POOR	1	1%
NO ANSWER	<u>18</u>	<u>17%</u>
TOTAL	106	100%

6. How well informed do you feel about giving presentations to school children? (N = 106)

VERY	36	34%
MODERATELY	59	56%
SLIGHTLY	6	5%
POOR	1	0
NO ANSWER	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
TOTAL	106	100%

7. How would you rate the overall training? (N = 106)

EXCELLENT	83	78%
GOOD	21	20%
FAIR	2	2%
POOR	0	0
NO ANSWER	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	106	100%

COMMENTS FROM 1983-84 VOLUNTEERS

"Thanks for the opportunity to help people understand handicaps so the disabled people can feel a part of everyday life."

"I have a niece and nephew who are handicapped and I wanted to learn more to help the public become aware of handicapped children. This training was a big help."

"It will be wonderful to have children in our area get some understanding of how people with handicaps can function. I would also hope through their exposure to the COUNT ME IN program, there would not be as much cruelty or laughing about the handicapped people."

"Thanks for helping me learn a great way to relate to the public to become at ease and informed about handicaps."

"I have time to be a volunteer. This is a project I felt was important and worthwhile."

"As a result of COUNT ME IN training, I have become interested in taking training to work in some way with exceptional children. I have now started taking courses at the university for this."

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION OF VOLUNTEER TRAINING THROUGHOUT MINNESOTA

Near the end of the year, follow-up evaluation forms were sent to participants in the first five trainings. (The participants in the last three trainings were not included since those trainings were held in late spring.) The purpose was to

Determine the trainees' opinions of the value of COUNT ME IN training after a period of time and to discover what kinds of awareness programs they had become involved with as a result of the COUNT ME IN training. Thirty-six (52% of the 69 volunteer trainees) returned the questionnaire. The following questions were asked:

1. From your present perspective, do you feel that COUNT ME IN training was useful to you? (Number = 36)

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
VERY	30	84%
MODERATELY	5	13%
SLIGHTLY	1	3%
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	36	100%

2. Do you believe the training helped you acquire greater knowledge about (a) handicapping conditions? (Number = 36)

VERY	26	72%
MODERATELY	6	17%
SLIGHTLY	3	8%
NOT AT ALL	1	3%
NO ANSWER OR HAD		
EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
TOTAL	36	100%

(b) special education laws? \*

VERY	14	39%
MODERATELY	15	42%
SLIGHTLY	3	8%
NOT AT ALL	1	3%
NO ANSWER OR HAD		
KNOWLEDGE BEFORE	<u>3</u>	<u>8%</u>
TOTAL	36	100%

\*At two COUNT ME IN training sessions, detailed information about special education laws was not included since PACER workshops on laws were scheduled for those communities in the near future.

(c) resources for information on handicaps?

VERY	19	53%
MODERATELY	12	33%
SLIGHTLY	2	6%
NOT AT ALL	1	3%
NO ANSWER	<u>2</u>	<u>5%</u>
TOTAL	36	100%

3. Do you feel that the training enhanced your personal positive attitudes about (a) handicapped people? (Number = 36)

VERY	28	78%
MODERATELY	6	16%
SLIGHTLY	1	3%

NOT AT ALL	0	0%
NO ANSWER OR HAD A POSITIVE ATTITUDE BEFORE	<u>1</u>	<u>3%</u>
TOTAL	36	100%

(b) handicapped children integrated into mainstream programs?

VERY	22	61%
MODERATELY	12	33%
SLIGHTLY	1	3%
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER OR HAD A POSITIVE ATTITUDE BEFORE	<u>1</u>	<u>3%</u>
TOTAL	36	100%

4. Do you believe the training helped you feel more comfortable meeting and relating to handicapped children and adults? (Number = 36)

VERY	22	61%
MODERATELY	9	25%
SLIGHTLY	3	8%
NOT AT ALL	2	6%
NO ANSWER OR FELT COMFORTABLE BEFORE	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
TOTAL	36	100%

5. Do you feel the training helped you become more supportive of the needs of handicapped children? (Number = 36)

VERY	29	80%
MODERATELY	5	14%
SLIGHTLY	3	6%
NOT AT ALL	0	0
NO ANSWER OR FELT COMFORTABLE BEFORE	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
TOTAL	36	100%

6. As a result of the COUNT ME IN training, have you in any way encouraged the development of a program or project to increase awareness of and positive attitudes towards persons with handicaps? (Number = 36)

YES	10	28%
NO	26	72%
NO RESPONSE	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
TOTAL	36	100%

The participants who responded "YES" listed the following activities they had been involved in since the training:

(a) Participants encouraged other handicap awareness programs in schools.  
These included promoting a week devoted to the study of handicapped children, talking to teachers, and parent organizations.

(b) Participants initiated handicap awareness in their churches.

Handicap awareness programs were planned for adults, special accommodations were created in church school classes for handicapped children, sign language songs were taught, and a task force was established to study ways to meet needs of handicapped children.

(c) Participants encouraged community awareness through local organizations' meetings, publicity about aids and appliances that make activities possible for people with handicaps, and publicity to encourage citizens to become volunteers in programs for children and adults with disabilities.

7. Have you had any opportunity to give any formal presentations about handicaps or special education laws in any of the following ways:

(a) educational programs (other than COUNT ME IN)	7	19%
(b) entertainment (other than COUNT ME IN)	2	6%
(c) speeches or talks to schools, college classes, (teachers, civic groups, professionals, etc.)	11	31%
(d) advocacy effort on behalf of handicapped children or adults	6	17%

Have you had the opportunity to talk informally about handicapping conditions on an individual basis or small group basis with:

(e) children	19	53%
(f) parents	20	56%
(g) educators	16	34%
(h) other adults	6	17%

8. From your present perspective is there any aspect of the training that you wish had received more time and/or emphasis?

YES*	19	53%
NO	20	56%
NO ANSWER	22	34%
TOTAL	36	100%

\*Most frequent responses requested more detailed information on some handicaps, more time for presentation techniques, tips on how to communicate with schools prior to shows, and additional time in how to answer questions from children.

9. Was the COUNT ME IN Resource Manual and packet you were given at the training helpful to you in any way?

YES	34	94%
NO	1	3%
NO RESPONSE	1	3%
TOTAL	36	100%

## CONCLUSIONS

COUNT ME IN training programs for volunteers in Minnesota during 1983-84 were rated as excellent or good by 98% of the respondents. After a period of several months, 97% of the respondents rated the training information as useful. The information from the training was used in a variety of ways by participants.



As a result of the training, 94% of the volunteers felt they had acquired more positive attitudes about handicapped people, 86% felt more comfortable meeting and relating to handicapped children, and 94% felt they had become more supportive of the needs of handicapped children. In each category, an additional 3% indicated they had positive attitudes and were supportive before the training and continued to be so.

For many of the participants who were not parents of handicapped children or disabled themselves, COUNT ME IN provided an initial understanding of Public Law 94-142 and the concept of the least restrictive alternative. From the evaluations, it was evident that the concept of "mainstreaming" had become more meaningful to the volunteers. Also, the information on disabilities and presentations by disabled persons and parents of handicapped children served as a beginning for further study and awareness on the part of many volunteers.

## Evaluation of 1983-84 Activities

### Level III - Training of Trainers and Replication

#### LEVEL III - TRAINING OF TRAINERS AND REPLICATION

During 1983-84, COUNT ME IN staff trained groups of volunteers in five rural communities where there was interest in establishing a handicap awareness project. For two of these communities (Washburn, Wisconsin, and Alexandria, Minnesota), PACER received funding from the Bremer Foundation. The other three (Montevideo, St. Cloud and Pipestone, Minnesota) raised funds locally.

The training included background information on handicaps and puppetry techniques as well as sessions about organizing a presentation about handicaps for children. Each trainee received the COUNT ME IN Resource Manual which contains references to many books, films and other resources available on this topic. The coordinator in each community received the COUNT ME IN Coordinator's Handbook which contains organizational suggestions and sample forms and publicity information useful in setting up a handicap awareness project. Many books and resources for children were displayed and discussed in the course of the training.

The Resource Manual and Coordinator's Manual are also available for a minimal fee. Numerous copies were sent to individuals around the country interested in handicap awareness activities.

## Evaluation of 1983-84 Activities

### Level IV - Presentations

#### LEVEL IV - ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

##### PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION



COUNT ME IN volunteers and staff presented 118 puppet programs about handicapped students to children in 50 elementary schools between October 15, 1983, and May 9, 1984, reaching approximately 11,560 children and about 462 teachers. The goal of COUNT ME IN (under its federal grant) was to give presentations in 30 to 40 elementary schools, reaching 2,500 to 3,500 children and about 90 teachers. Additional funds were received in order to reach more children.

The content and information of the puppet programs were adapted for the ages and grade levels of the audiences. Two basic programs were presented. A 45 minute program for younger children (approximately grades K-3) included presentations on blindness, deafness, and one of two physical disabilities, cerebral palsy or spina bifida. For elementary children in grades 1-6, the program was expanded to one hour and presentations on mental retardation, epilepsy, and learning disabilities, in addition to the other three, were available as choices for the program. Each disability was discussed in a 7-10 minute skit that usually involved two puppets, one with the particular handicap, and the other as a nonhandicapped friend.

At the conclusion of the puppet shows, children were each given a COUNT ME IN letter to take home to parents. Teachers received materials for their classroom (braille cards, sign language cards, and a copy of the COUNT ME IN song) and each school received a COUNT ME IN Resource Manual for all teachers.

#### SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION ACTIVITIES

Of 118 presentations for 11,060 children in 43 Twin Cities area schools, and 500 children in seven rural schools, 71 (64%) of the presentations were programs for children in grades K-3. Forty (36%) of the presentations were given to children in fourth through sixth grade classes. The average audience size was 90 students and 4 adults.

A map on the following page shows the locations of 1979-84 presentations.

PACER staff requested a maximum audience size for preschool performance of 40 children with parents encouraged to attend. For elementary programs, PACER staff preferred an audience of no more than approximately 60-90 children (2 to 3 classes). The small audience size permitted personal interaction of students with puppets and the equipment on display.

#### EVALUATION OF COUNT ME IN PRESENTATIONS

PACER Center evaluated the COUNT ME IN presentations by surveying the children and teachers who viewed the programs.

PACER used the following three types of evaluations:

1. Pre and post performance student evaluations completed by selected audiences of 4th to 6th graders.
2. Post performance evaluations completed by all classroom teachers.
3. Follow-up teacher evaluations of the project after a period of several months.

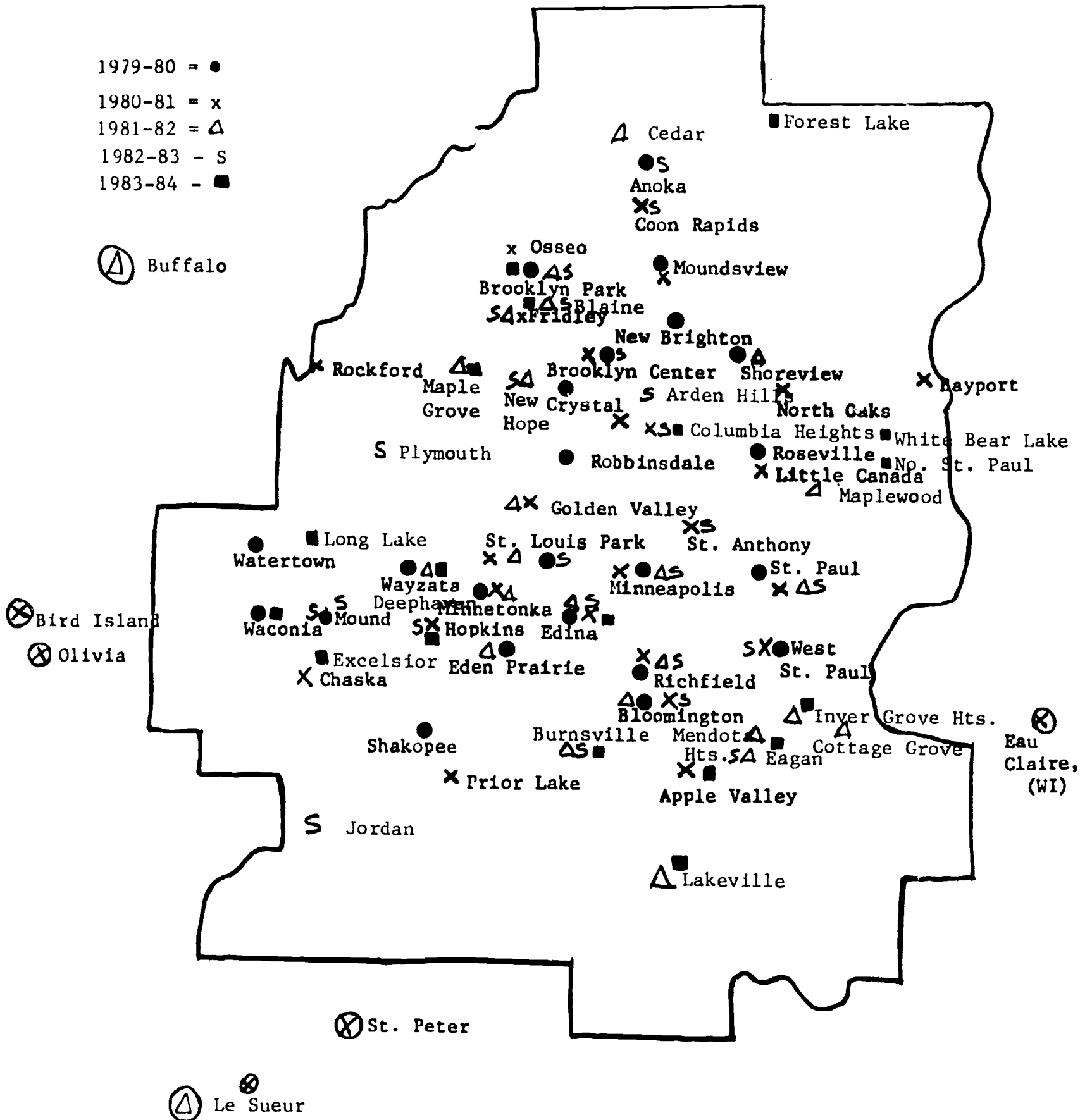
#### STUDENT EVALUATIONS

COUNT ME IN  
LOCATIONS OF PUPPET SHOWS  
(1979-84)

(Seven County Twin City Metropolitan Area)  
1 inch = 13 miles - ⊗ Outside Metro area

1979-80 = ●  
1980-81 = x  
1981-82 = △  
1982-83 = S  
1983-84 = ■

△ Buffalo



To assess responses from children to the COUNT ME IN programs, a pre and post performance evaluation instrument was developed by the PACER staff. The instrument selected was administered to 398 students in grades four through six during the year. (For results from students in previous years, see 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83 Evaluation Reports.)

The children were asked to complete an evaluation survey before the presentation. Immediately following the puppet presentation but before moving around the room to talk to puppets individually or examine equipment on display, children were asked to complete the post presentation survey. All evaluations were administered by PACER staff persons. For purposes of instruction, students were given hypothetical examples to be sure they clearly understood the directions.

The student evaluation was designed to measure children's responses in two ways: (1) in terms of their responses to the presentation itself, (2) in terms of their comfort level with disabilities and acceptance of handicapped children.

The pre and post performance evaluation consisted of six questions which were chosen to elicit responses related to opinions, misconceptions, and knowledge that children might have about disabilities and handicapped persons. For each question, children had a choice of five responses arranged on a five point Likert Scale. The post presentation evaluation included three additional questions to elicit direct responses to COUNT ME IN goals.

#### STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Student reactions to the COUNT ME IN program and its goals are revealed in responses given to the three general questions asked on the post evaluation. The tables below demonstrate student responses:

##### Questions

1. Did you like the COUNT ME IN show? (Number of students = 398)

YES	381	96%
NO	<u>17</u>	<u>4%</u>
TOTAL	398	100%

2. Did you learn anything new about handicaps today? (N = 398)

YES	368	93%
NO	<u>30</u>	<u>7%</u>
TOTAL	398	100%

3. After seeing the COUNT ME IN show, do you feel better about handicapped children? (N = 398)

YES	375	94%
NO	<u>23</u>	<u>6%</u>
TOTAL	398	100%

#### SIX STATEMENTS MEASURING ATTITUDE CHANGE

The six statements used on the pre and post evaluation forms to determine student

attitudes were analyzed for the purpose of determining the overall percentage of students marking each item's response category on the Likert Scale.

On the following page the statements used on the questionnaire are listed as they were presented to the students. PACER was most interested in comparing the number of students who chose the "most positive response" for each statement and whether that number increased after seeing the program. The comparisons for each statement follow:

#### RESULTS OF STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Students were asked to respond to statements concerning attitudes towards handicapped classmates both before and after the COUNT ME IN show by recording whether or not they agreed with each statement. The attitudinal statements are given below and followed by the percentages of students making the most desirable responses.

1. I AM SCARED TO PLAY WITH HANDICAPPED KIDS.

The most desirable response to this statement was "disagree a lot." Forty percent of the 398 students gave the most desired response before the program; 58% gave it afterwards. The number of children giving the most desirable response was 18% greater after the program.

2. A STUDENT WITH A HANDICAP WOULD BE WELCOME IN MY CLASSROOM.

The most desirable response for this statement was "agree a lot." Fifty-six percent of the 398 students gave the most desired response before the program; 65% gave it afterwards. The number of children giving the most desirable response was 9% greater after the program.

3. HANDICAPPED KIDS LIKE TO BE ALONE MOST OF THE TIME.

The most desirable response to this statement was "disagree a lot." Fifty-one percent of the 398 students gave the most desired response before the program; 61% gave it afterwards. The number of children giving the most desirable response was 10% greater after the program.

4. I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A PERSON WITH A HANDICAP AS A FRIEND.

The most desirable response to this statement was "agree a lot." Thirty-two percent of the 398 students gave the most desired response before the program; 45% gave it afterwards. The number of children giving the most desirable response was 13% greater after the program.

5. HANDICAPPED KIDS CAN DO LOTS OF THINGS.

The most desirable response to this statement was "agree a lot." Fifty percent of the 398 students gave the most desired response before the program; 68% gave it afterwards. The number of children giving the most desirable response was 18% greater after the program.

6. HANDICAPPED KIDS ARE SAD MOST OF THE TIME.

The most desirable response to this statement was "disagree a lot." Thirty-eight percent of the 398 students gave the most desired response before the program;

59% gave it afterwards. The number of children giving the most desirable response was 21% greater after the program.

### CONCLUSIONS - STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Analysis of the evaluation results indicate that from a student perspective, the COUNT ME IN program was meaningful and helped to foster positive attitudes. Ninety-six percent of the students stated they liked the show, 94% felt better about handicapped children after participating in the COUNT ME IN project, and 93% reported they learned something new about handicaps. The puppet presentation, with opportunities for questions and experimentation with aids and appliances, helped dispel fears and apprehensions, and acquainted children with feelings and abilities of handicapped children.

An average of 59% of all students gave the "most desirable response" to six questions on attitudes after the COUNT ME IN presentation, while only 44% of the students had done so before the show. Thus it appears that COUNT ME IN made a significant contribution toward fostering positive attitudes.

### TEACHER EVALUATIONS

To determine the effectiveness of the COUNT ME IN program from the perspective of the classroom teacher, PACER developed an evaluation form for teachers to complete immediately after the program.

The following charts show the teachers' responses:

1. How would you rate the COUNT ME IN presentation? (Number = 210)

	Elem. Teacher	Total
EXCELLENT	161	77%
VERY GOOD	47	22%
FAIR	1	5%
POOR	0	0
NO ANSWER	<u>3</u>	<u>5%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

2. Did the information on disabilities seem appropriate for the age of your children? (Number = 210)

VERY APPROPRIATE	177	84%
APPROPRIATE	32	15%
SLIGHTLY	0	0%
NOT APPROPRIATE		5%
NO ANSWER	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

3. How informative do you believe the show was for your students? (No.=210)

VERY INFORMATIVE	168	80%
INFORMATIVE	38	18%
SLIGHTLY	1	5%
NOT AT ALL	1	5%
NO ANSWER	<u>2</u>	<u>1%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

4. Was the program the right length of time for your children? (No.=210)

YES	199	95%
NO: TOO LONG	<u>11</u>	<u>5%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

5. Do you believe the COUNT ME IN show will help improve attitudes that children in your classroom may have toward handicapped children?

(Number = 210)

A GREAT DEAL	174	83%
MODERATELY	30	14%
SLIGHTLY	0	0%
NOT AT ALL	1	5%
NO RESPONSE	<u>5</u>	<u>2.5%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

6. Following the COUNT ME IN presentation, I now feel (a) more comfortable helping a handicapped student fit into my class. (No.= 210)

STRONGLY AGREE	68	33%
AGREE	97	46%
DISAGREE	3	1%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0%
NO RESPONSE	<u>42</u>	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

- (b) more comfortable helping nonhandicapped students understand disabilities. (Number = 210)

STRONGLY AGREE	85	40%
AGREE	85	41%
DISAGREE	2	1%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0%
NO RESPONSE	<u>38</u>	<u>18%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

- (c) more comfortable helping classroom teachers deal with handicapped students. (Number = 210)

STRONGLY AGREE	57	27%
AGREE	88	42%
DISAGREE	4	2%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	1%
NO RESPONSE	<u>60</u>	<u>28%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

7. I am interested in using follow-up activities on handicaps with children. (Number = 210)

YES	144	69%
NO	22	10%
NO RESPONSE	<u>44</u>	<u>21%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

8. It would be helpful to me as a teacher to read specific information on disabilities. (Number = 210)

YES	142	68%
NO	16	8%
NO RESPONSE	<u>52</u>	<u>24%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

9. I would appreciate information that would enable me to better recognize "hidden handicaps." (Number = 210)

YES	110	53%
NO	36	17%
NO RESPONSE	<u>64</u>	<u>30%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

10. I would like more information about communicating with parents of handicapped children. (Number = 210)

YES	60	29%
NO	69	32%
NO RESPONSE	<u>81</u>	<u>39%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

11. I would be interested in receiving training about methods of fostering positive attitudes about disabilities. (Number = 210)

YES	67	32%
NO	65	31%
NO RESPONSE	<u>73</u>	<u>37%</u>
TOTAL	210	100%

Many of the teachers requested programs and/or materials about specific handicaps. In addition, requests for general information on disabilities were made by several teachers. Many of the teachers who answered "NO" to the questions on general information did add that they would be interested in further information on handicaps if and when a handicapped child were mainstreamed into their classroom.

#### TEACHER FOLLOW-UP EVALUATIONS

PACER also was interested to learn about ongoing influences the COUNT ME IN program may have had on the activities in the classroom. Approximately 2-3 months after a program at a school, PACER sent follow-up evaluations to the 211 classroom teachers whose students had viewed the program before April 15. Fifty-four percent (54) returned the forms, 113 elementary teachers.

Teacher perspectives were valuable in evaluating increases in student handicap awareness. The teacher responses are demonstrated in the following charts.



1. Following the COUNT ME IN program, the majority of children in my class gained knowledge (facts) about disabled persons. (Number = 113)

	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Total</u>
STRONGLY AGREE	46	41%
AGREE	60	53%
DISAGREE	1	1%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0%
NO RESPONSE	<u>6</u>	5%
	113	100%

2. Following the COUNT ME IN program, the majority of children in my class demonstrated positive changes in attitudes towards persons with handicaps. (Number = 113)

STRONGLY AGREE	26	23%
AGREE	66	58%
DISAGREE	4	4%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0%
NO ANSWER	<u>17</u>	<u>15%</u>
TOTAL	113	100%

3. In what ways has the COUNT ME IN program been helpful to you in the classroom?

The most frequent replies were that COUNT ME IN stimulated ongoing discussion about and awareness of handicapped children, that students became more understanding of handicapped children in their classrooms, and that misconceptions were corrected. Teachers also cited evidence of how COUNT ME IN had benefitted them personally by making them aware of the capabilities of handicapped people.

4. Teachers were asked to indicate which of the following activities they use with their students after seeing the COUNT ME IN program.

	<u>Elem. Teacher</u>	<u>Total*</u>
Class discussion on handicaps	95	84%
Simulation activities	15	13%
Books about handicaps read by/for children	42	37%
Films about handicaps or handicapped children	22	19%
Speakers on handicaps	23	20%
Equipment brought in	14	12%
Field trips related to handicaps	5	4%
Other activities	6	5%

\*Because teachers could check more than one of these categories, percentages are given to indicate what percentage of the teachers responding used any given activity.



### TEACHER EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

The evaluations showed that 99% of the teachers rated the program as excellent or very good as well as appropriate and informative for their children.

Ninety-seven percent of the teachers viewing the program believed that the attitudes of their students toward handicapped children would improve as a result of the COUNT ME IN program. In addition, 81% of those responding to the follow-up evaluation believed that their students had shown improved attitudes toward handicapped children.

### EVALUATION REPORT

Since its inception in 1979, the COUNT ME IN project has involved more than 60,000 people in its handicap awareness activities. The staff has trained more than 600 adults and teens in Minnesota and other states about techniques of presenting information about handicaps to children. More than 50,000 preschool and elementary students in the greater metropolitan area of Minneapolis-St. Paul and suburbs have attended the puppet presentations given by COUNT ME IN staff and trained volunteers. Added to this student population are 1,500 junior high students who were part of the COUNT ME IN programs during 1983-84. Approximately 1,400 teachers of metro area students and an additional 600 parents and other school personnel also attended the school programs. Through presentations to adult groups such as teacher inservices, civic organizations, PTA's, and community groups, another 10,000 persons were recipients of COUNT ME IN handicap awareness activities.

# COUNT ME IN

## SECONDARY SCHOOL PROJECT

### 1983-1984

Under the auspices of a grant from the National Easter Seal Society, the COUNT ME IN project of PACER Center, Inc. was able to develop programs on four disabilities, train seven adults to present the programs, reach more than 1,500 seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students in the greater metropolitan area of Minneapolis - St. Paul, Minnesota, and publish two secondary manuals about disabilities (one for teachers and one for students.)

Based on pilot studies done in the spring of 1982 with a group of high school students and in the spring of 1983 with seventh and eighth grade students, the COUNT ME IN staff developed four separate programs to help seventh through ninth grade students learn about the disabilities of blindness, deafness, cerebral palsy, and mental retardation. Each program focuses on one disability and explores facts about the handicap; aids and appliances; and educational, occupational, and independent living considerations. PACER puppets are incorporated into each program to portray and discuss social issues that are of concern to handicapped and non-handicapped teenagers.

The programs are written in such a way that they can be used in class times ranging from 40-60 minutes. Two or three volunteers/puppeteers are required to give each program.

Seven puppeteers who had previously attended a COUNT ME IN three day training session on disabilities were given an additional day of training on the specific disability program they were interested in presenting to secondary students. Two puppeteers elected to serve on two secondary program teams.

Presentations were given preferably for one class at a time (approximately 30 students) so students could have ample opportunity to ask questions. Occasionally two or three classes were grouped together for a performance in a large classroom or auditorium setting (i.e. health classes; social studies classes in a modular schedule/building structure.)

A summary description of each of the four programs was sent to schools and teachers who had expressed an interest in the COUNT ME IN secondary project. Teachers then could request the program that a) best fit their curriculum, b) related to topics or issues being discussed by the class, or c) reflected needs or concerns at the school.

The year-end totals revealed that 53 programs were given: 17 programs about blindness were presented to 662 students, 10 programs on hearing impairments for 386 students, 13 presentations on physical disabilities for 494 students, plus 13 programs on mental retardation for 560. While the total number of students in the secondary audience was 2,102, PACER honored the requests of 4 social studies classes, 2 English as Second Language classes, and 2 health classes to present programs about 2 different disabilities on separate days. Thus the unduplicated number of students reached was 1,517.

The COUNT ME IN staff developed and refined questionnaires for each of the four programs to administer to selected audience, at the beginning of the class hour and again at the end of the presentation to determine whether there had been gains in students' knowledge and/or changes in attitude as a result of seeing the COUNT ME IN program.

Each teacher was given a 106 page COUNT ME IN RESOURCE MANUAL on disabilities plus a 36 page SECONDARY SCHOOL SUPPLEMENT developed by the COUNT ME IN coordinators which lists questions teenagers commonly ask about disabilities plus recommended appropriate answers. The Supplement also includes lists of books and films available for secondary audiences.

Each student was given a 16 page booklet developed by PACER Center entitled DISABLED? YES. ABLE? ALSO YES. Included in the booklet are stories about teenagers with disabilities. Students were also given bookmarks with helpful hints on relating to people with handicaps.

Following is a summary of each program, the number of students reached, and the evaluation results.

## VISION IMPAIRMENTS

The program on blindness features four puppets who represent teenagers. Carmen, Sally, and Mitch have become friends of Gina, a blind student who moved to their school the previous fall. They realize they don't know what she'll do for "summer fun" now that vacation time is approaching. They are amazed by what Gina has planned for summer and for her future.

The program also includes information about causes of blindness, about Braille, guide dogs, adaptations for everyday living, and various aids and appliances demonstrated by Gina and the COUNT ME IN puppeteers.

Three puppeteers, one of whom is blind, comprised the team that presented 17 programs to 6 different schools for a total of 662 students. Presentations were given to 7th and 9th grade social studies classes, 8th grade English, 7th grade health classes, and 9-12th grade classes of students in English as a Second Language program (mostly Southeast Asian immigrants for whom integration of handicapped people into the mainstream of society is a new concept.)

Evaluations were conducted with five selected classes (not ESL students) and administered by the puppeteers.

To raise student awareness of some common misconceptions about people who are blind, and to determine student knowledge, the following questions were asked on the pre-and post-program evaluations.

Statement  (N = 289)	# Correct on Pre-test	# Correct on Post-test	% of students who demon- strated an increase in knowledge
1. Most blind persons have some degree of sight. (TRUE)	172	266	33%
2. Most blind children are now educated in state schools for the blind. (FALSE)	39	141	35%
3. Persons with vision impairments have better hearing than others. (FALSE)	88	157	24%
4. Many persons who are blind live independently in their own homes. (TRUE)	202	267	23%

5. Which of the following activities do you think blind people would be able to do? (All but drive)	# Correct on pre-test	# Correct on post-test	% of Students who demonstrated an increase in knowledge
Water ski	136	262	44%
Down hill ski	87	214	44%
Cook a meal	251	254	1%
Raise a child	245	283	14%
Drive a car	0	0	0%
Ride a bicycle	98	168	24%
Dress themselves	284	285	0%
Teach in a college	148	202	19%
Buy a home	232	271	14%
Dance	266	278	4%

COUNT ME IN, as part of its evaluation activities, wanted to determine what percentage of students might have experienced an attitude change toward persons who are blind as a result of seeing the secondary program on blindness. Students both before and after the program were asked the question, "How do you feel about the following situations?" and given a choice of five answers: very comfortable, comfortable, I don't know, uncomfortable, very uncomfortable.

The following chart demonstrates the percentage of students whose attitudes changed positively or negatively after the program, as well as those who remained unchanged.

Situation (N = 289)	Changed in a positive direction # %		Stayed the same # %		Changed in a negative direction # %		No Answer # %	
6. Being introduced to and starting a conversation with...								
a. a blind adult.	125	43%	138	48%	15	5%	11	4%
b. a teenager who is blind.	120	40%	140	48%	17	6%	12	4%
c. a mother who has a blind child with her.	100	35%	159	55%	18	6%	12	4%
7. Being asked by your school counselor to help a student with homework who...								
a. recently lost his/her eyesight.	118	41%	134	46%	24	8%	13	5%
b. just moved into the school and is blind.	118	41%	131	45%	26	9%	14	5%
c. is a blind elementary student.	111	38%	138	48%	22	8%	18	6%

8. Learning that your new neighbors...	Positive direction		Stayed the same		Negative direction		No answer	
a. are both blind.	101	35%	156	54%	19	7%	19	7%
b. would like you to babysit their blind infant.	99	34%	156	54%	19	7%	13	4%
c. have adopted several children who are blind.	98	34%	154	53%	22	8%	15	5%

9. Did you learn anything new about blindness? (N = 206: Question was not asked at first program)								
Yes			No			No Answer		
192 = 93%			7 = 4%			7 = 4%		

10. How would you rate the program? (N = 289):				
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Answer
97 = 34%	158 = 55%	28 = 10%	2 = 0%	4 = 1%

The evaluation results show that 93% of the students learned something new about blindness, 89% rated the program as excellent or good, and from 34% - 43% of the surveyed students indicated they felt a positive change of attitude toward children and adults who are blind.

## HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

In the program on hearing impairments, students learned some facts about hearing aids, hearing loss, and means of communication from the COUNT ME IN puppeteers.

Jay, the puppet who represents a hearing-impaired teenager with good speech and lipreading skills, demonstrates his TDD note (telephone device for deaf persons) and discusses adaptations for everyday living such as closed captions on TV, a vibrating alarm clock, and use of lights for being aware of a doorbell ringing, baby crying, or phone call coming in.

Jay and his friend Mitch discuss Jay's ambition to run for Student Council President and the kinds of concerns a hearing impairment presents for that role, should Jay be elected. Jay is also a hockey star - a goalie for his team.

The puppeteer team for programs consisted of two persons, one of whom is the parent of a deaf child. Ten programs were given at four schools for 386 students in 9th grade civics, social studies, and English classes, as well as in 7th and 8th grade health classes.

To determine what students might learn about aspects of hearing impairments from the program, the following questions were asked on the pre-tests and post-tests administered to 235 students. Students were asked to put a check by each statement they thought completed the sentence correctly.

Statement  (N = 235)	# correct on pre-test	# correct on post-test	% of students who demon- strated an increase in knowledge
1. Most children who are deaf...			
a. have deaf parents (FALSE)	183	216	14%
b. do not make vocal sounds when laughing or crying. (FALSE)	164	210	20%
c. even those under the age of one, are fitted with hearing aids as soon as the need for one is diagnosed. (TRUE)	153	208	23%
2. Hearing losses may be caused by...			
a. heredity (TRUE)	71	99	12%
b. mother being exposed to loud noises dur- ing pregnancy. (FALSE)	179	191	5%

	# Correct on pre-test	# Correct post-test	% inc. in knowledge
c. Maternal illness during pregnancy (TRUE)	168	203	15%
3. Sign language...			
a. is used by all hearing impaired people (FALSE)	145	170	11%
b. is the third most commonly used language in the U.S. (TRUE)	38	150	48%
c. includes letters that are finger-spelled and hand shapes that represent words. (TRUE)	156	171	6%
4. Good terms to use for describing hearing-impaired people include which of the following:			
deaf (YES)	159	192	14%
deaf-mute (NO)	159	192	14%
stone deaf (NO)	154	208	23%
hard-of-hearing (YES)	196	211	6%
deaf and dumb (NO)	174	205	13%
retarded (NO)	222	226	2%

The following chart demonstrates the percentage of students whose attitudes changed positively or negatively or stayed the same after seeing the program.

Students were asked to respond to the question "How do you feel about the following situations?" by indicating: very comfortable, comfortable, I don't know, uncomfortable, very uncomfortable.

Situation	Change in a positive direction		Stayed the same		Negative change		No Answer	
(N = 235)	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
6. Being asked by a teacher to help a student who is deaf with homework.	75	32%	145	62%	9	4%	6	2%
7. Learning that your new neighbors are both deaf and use sign language to communicate.	69	30%	149	63%	12	5%	5	2%
8. Being asked out on a date by someone who wears a hearing aid.	67	29%	155	66%	8	3%	5	2%



9. Did you learn anything new about hearing impairments from the presentation on hearing impairment?

Yes	No	No Answer
204 = 87%	6 = 2%	25 = 11%

10. How would you rate the presentation on deafness?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Answer
86 = 37%	116 = 49%	14 = 6%	1 = 0%	18 = 8%

From these evaluations, PACER learned that 87% of the students surveyed felt they had learned something new about hearing impairments, 86% of the students rated the program as excellent or good, and 29% - 32% of the students demonstrated more positive attitudes about hearing impaired children and adults after the program.

## PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

The puppet Sally (who uses a wheelchair and represents a teenager with cerebral palsy), along with three COUNT ME IN puppeteers (one of whom is physically disabled), assisted students in learning some basic facts about cerebral palsy/spinal cord injury/spina bifida, and about how physically disabled persons are able to drive, live quite independently, and participate actively in many sports and occupations. Various aids and appliances were demonstrated and laws about education and accessibility explained.

In a script featuring four puppets, Sally has a dilemma about whether or not to ask Mitch, a nonhandicapped friend, to a turn-about dance. Should she ask someone to a school dance despite the fact she can't dance? Will he accept because he does want to go with her or...just because he feels sorry for her? Or will he say no and then feel too awkward to continue their friendship? Students proposed and discussed possible endings to the script.

The program on physical disabilities was requested by teachers of 9th grade social studies and health classes, as well as 7th and 8th grade English classes and general option classes, and for 9-12th grade students in English as a Second Language program. At 7 different schools, 13 presentations were given to 494 students.

Evaluation questionnaires were administered to 170 students. In an effort to understand students' knowledge about some of the lesser known facts about physical disabilities, a questionnaire given before and after the program asked students to correctly identify the following statements either in a true/false manner or a multiple choice manner:

Statement (N = 159)(11 invalid)	# correct on pre-test	# correct on post-test	% of students who gained knowledge
1. Cerebral palsy is usually caused by a lack of oxygen to the brain.	125	143	11%
2. The word "paraplegia" means paralyzed in the legs.	33	93	38%
3. The leading cause of physical disability among teens is spinal cord injury.	81	124	27%
4. The percentage of persons with cerebral palsy who are also mentally retarded is less than 50%.	53	89	23%
5. The federal law on education for children with handicaps guarantees that all are entitled to an appropriate education.	121	142	13%

To measure the possible impact of the program on students' attitudes about persons with physical disabilities, COUNT ME IN asked students to respond to the question "How do you feel about the following situations?" in one of five ways: very uncomfortable, comfortable, I don't know, uncomfortable, very uncomfortable.

The students' answers before and after the program revealed the following percentages of change:

Situation  (N = 170)	Change in a positive direction		Stayed the same		Change in negative direction		No Answer	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
6. Meeting and starting a conversation with someone who...								
has cerebral palsy	67	39%	91	54%	2	1%	10	6%
uses a wheelchair	55	32%	91	54%	14	8%	10	6%
uses crutches	36	21%	110	65%	14	8%	10	6%
7. Being asked by your school counselor to help someone with homework who...								
uses a wheelchair	56	33%	91	54%	11	6%	12	7%
has cerebral palsy	69	41%	82	48%	8	5%	11	6%
is newly paralyzed from the neck down from a spinal cord injury	72	42%	81	48%	7	4%	10	6%
8. Being asked out on a date by someone who...								
uses a wheelchair	88	52%	66	39%	7	4%	9	5%
uses crutches	72	44%	79	47%	7	4%	10	5%
has cerebral palsy	80	47%	74	44%	3	1%	13	8%

AFTER THE PROGRAM, students were also asked:

9. Did you learn anything new about physical disabilities? (N = 109) (Two classes not asked)					
Yes	No	No Answer			
95 = 87%	4 = 2%	10	=	11%	
10. How would you rate the program on physical disabilities? (N = 109) (Two classes not asked)					
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Answer	
70 = 45%	69 = 44%	9 = 6%	1 = 0%	8	= 5%

The tabulations on the student evaluations reveal that 87% of the students learned something new about physical disabilities, 89% rated the program as excellent or good, and 21% - 52% demonstrated more positive attitudes on the post-evaluation towards children and adults who are physically disabled.

# PROGRAM ON MENTAL RETARDATION

In the puppet presentation on mental retardation, Carmen, a nonhandicapped puppet and student director of the high school play, is concerned about the negative reactions of cast members to the announcement that mentally retarded high school students will be attending the preview performance of the school play. How can she help improve their attitudes? Corky, the puppet who represents mental retardation, is excited about attending the play, meeting cast members and learning about drama and student roles. Carmen and Mitch, a member of the cast, also learn something new from Corky.

Students learned some facts about people who are mentally retarded and viewed an 11 minute slide/tape presentation produced by the St. Paul Association of Retarded Citizens. The slide/tape, entitled "I Never Thought About It", focuses on causes of mental retardation and preventative measures that can reduce the number of cases by 50%. Ahmad Rashad of the Minnesota Vikings narrates the slide/tape along with young adults who are parents or siblings of retarded children.

Three puppeteers presented 13 programs on mental retardation to 560 students at 6 schools. Teachers requested the program for entire 7th and 8th grade populations at two private schools; 7th and 9th grade health classes, 9th grade social studies classes, and limited English proficiency students in grades 9-12 at public schools.

COUNT ME IN was interested in learning the knowledge base of 7-9th grade students on a variety of facts associated with mental retardation. In pre- and post-evaluations, students were asked to choose the correct statements from among the following choices:

Statements (N = 219)	# Correct on pretest	# Correct on posttest	% of students who gained knowledge
1. People who are mentally retarded...			
a. have a right to education in the public schools (YES)	173	196	11%
b. must live in institutions as adults (NO)	199	202	1%
c. can hold jobs as adults if they're mildly or moderately retarded (YES)	139	198	27%
2. Of all retarded students, how many are only mildly handicapped?			
___ 1/3 ___ 1/2 ___ X nearly all	46	161	53%
3. Experts estimate that some cases of retardation can be prevented. How many cases do you think?			
___ 1/3 ___ 1/2 ___ X nearly all	48	152	47%

	# Correct on pre-test	# Correct on post-test	% who gained knowledge
4. Babies born with Down's Syndrome...			
a. have an extra chromosome that causes their problem (YES)	48	172	57%
b. can never be expected to take care of themselves (NO)	176	199	11%
c. Number of students who know the term "Down's Syndrome."	91	195	47%
5. The Special Olympics...			
a. are open to mentally retarded children and adults age 8 and older (YES)	149	193	20%
b. conduct international meets in various parts of the world every four years (YES)	45	200	71%
c. have had over one million participants from more than 50 countries (YES)	72	132	23%

To determine whether or not the program had any influence on students' attitudes towards people with mental retardation, the following questions were asked and responses compared on the pre-test and post-test: "How do you feel about the following situations"? The possible responses from which the student could choose were: very comfortable, comfortable, I don't know, uncomfortable, very uncomfortable.

Situation (N = 223)	Change in a positive direction		Stayed same		Change in a negative dir.		No Answer	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
6. Being introduced to and starting a conversation with an adult who is retarded.	81	= 36%	133	= 60%	4	= 2%	5	= 2%
7. Being asked by your school counselor to help a student who is retarded with some assignments.	53	= 24%	147	= 66%	18	= 8%	5	= 2%

	Positive change	Stayed the same	Negative change	No Answer
8. Learning that your new neighbors have adopted several children who are mentally retarded.	65 = 29%	148 = 66%	5 = 2%	5 = 3%

AFTER THE PROGRAM, the students were asked the following opinions:

9. How would you rate the program on mental retardation? (N = 214)				
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Answer
81 = 38%	94 = 44%	20 = 10%	2 = 1%	17 = 7%
10. Did you learn anything new about mental retardation? (N = 214)				
Yes	No	No Answer		
184 = 86%	10 = 5%	20 = 9%		

As a result of the COUNT ME IN program on mental retardation, 86% of the students indicated they had learned new information, 82% rated the program as excellent or good, and from 24% - 36% of the students demonstrated more positive attitudes towards mentally retarded children and adults on the post-program evaluation.

From the perspective of the evaluation results, the COUNT ME IN staff and puppeteers felt that the COUNT ME IN secondary programs met the goals of helping 7-9th grade students learn more about individuals with handicapping conditions. The program, along with the Secondary School Supplement to the COUNT ME IN Resource Manual and the student booklet, Disabled? Yes. Able? Also Yes, comprise an effective way to acquaint teens with disabilities and influence the development of more positive attitudes.

# APPENDIX

## PACER Center, Inc.

### Participating Organizations

Comprehensive Epilepsy Program  
Courage Center  
Friends of Hearing Handicapped  
Children  
Mental Health Assoc. of Minnesota  
Mental Health Advocates' Coalition  
Minneapolis Assoc. for the Hearing  
Impaired  
Minnesota Assoc. for Children With  
Learning Disabilities  
Minnesota Assoc. for Retarded Citizens  
Minnesota Committee for the  
Handicapped

Minnesota Epilepsy League  
Minnesota Foundation for Better  
Hearing and Speech  
Minnesota Speech-Language and  
Hearing Assoc.  
Minnesota State Council for the  
Handicapped  
Muscular Dystrophy Assoc. of  
Minnesota  
Natl. Fed. of the Blind of Minn.  
Spina Bifida Assoc. of Minn.  
Twin Cities Society for Autistic  
Children  
United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota

## PACER Center, Inc.

### Board of Directors

Christy Bateman  
Donna Bruhl  
Maria Callender  
Meg Carvell  
Barbara Flanigan  
Lyle Frost  
Sandra Holmstoen, Treasurer  
Carol E. Johnson  
Jean Keck

Tish Martinez  
Barb Pollister, President  
Charlotte Price  
Darlene Sam  
Kay Shaw, Vice President  
Eleanor Swanson  
John Thompson  
Peg Williams  
Hazel Youngmann, Secretary